

ACTIVE PASSIVE VOICE RULES FOR ALL TENSES

When a sentence is written, it can either be written in active voice or passive voice where the meaning remains the same but the focus changes.

- Active voice describes a sentence where the subject performs the action stated by the verb. It is widely used, because it is clear to understand. For example: Tom changed the flat tire.
- Passive voice describes a sentence where the subject is acted upon by the verb. It is widely used when the agent performing the action is not known or when you want to focus more on the object rather than the subject. For example: The tire was changed by Tom, All the flights were cancelled due to the cyclone. The president was killed in 1998.

Fundamental Rules

- The places of subject and object in sentence are inter-changed in passive voice.
- 3rd form of verb (past participle) will be used only (as main verb) in passive voice.
- Auxiliary verbs for each tense are given below in the table

Present Simple Tense (passive Voice) Auxiliary verb in passive voice: am/is/are	
Active voice: He sings a song. He does not sing a song. Does he sing a song?	Passive voice: A song is sung by him. A song is not sung by him. Is a song sung by him?

Present Continuous Tense (passive Voice) Auxiliary verb in passive voice: am being/is being/are being	
Active voice: I am writing a letter I am not writing a letter. Am I writing a letter?	Passive voice: A letter is being written by me. A letter is not being written by me. Is a letter being written by me?

Present Perfect Tense (passive Voice) Auxiliary verb in passive voice: has been/have been	
Active voice: She has finished his work She has not finished her work. Has she finished her work?	Passive voice: Her work has been finished by her. Her work has not been finished by her. Has her work been finished by her?

Past Simple Tense (passive Voice) Auxiliary verb in passive voice: was/were	
Active voice: I killed a snake I did not kill a snake. Did I kill a snake?	Passive voice: A snake was killed by me. A snake was not killed by me. Was a snake killed by me?

Past Continuous Tense (Passive Voice) Auxiliary verb in passive voice: was being/were being	
Active voice: He was driving a car. He was not driving a car. Was he driving a car?	Passive voice: A car was being driven by him. A car was not being driven by him. Was a car being driven by him?

Past Perfect Tense (Passive Voice) Auxiliary verb in passive voice: had been	
Active voice: They had completed the assignment. They had not completed the assignment. Had they completed the assignment?	Passive voice: The assignment had been completed by them. The assignment had not been complete by them. Had the assignment been completed by them?

Future Simple Tense (Passive Voice) Auxiliary verb in passive voice: will be	
Active voice: She will buy a car. She will not buy a car. Will she buy a car?	Passive voice: A car will be bought by her. A car will not be bought by her. Will a car be bought by her?

Future Perfect Tense (passive Voice) Auxiliary verb in passive voice: will have been	
Active voice: You will have started the job. You will have not started the job. Will you have started the job?	Passive voice: The job will have been started by you. The job will not have been started by you. Will the job have been started by you?

Note: The following tenses cannot be changed into passive voice.

1. Present perfect continuous tense
2. Past perfect continuous tense
3. Future continuous tense
4. Future perfect continuous tense
5. Sentence having Intransitive verbs – They are verbs that have a subject but no object.
Eg. Run, fall, die, sleep, arrive etc.
6. Stative verbs are verbs that show a state, quality or description of a subject, and not the action. Eg. Be, feel, have, belong, need, love, think, believe, want, understand.....

Modal auxiliaries: The form of passive sentences will be modal +be+ auxiliary

Eg: AV 1. You can do this work.

PV: This work can be done by you

2. Could you lend me fifty rupees?

PV: Could fifty rupees be lent to me by you?

Changing an imperative sentence in the active voice to passive

Imperative sentences: These sentences express command, suggestion, order, request etc. while changing such sentences we use verbs like order request etc

Eg: AV: 1. Please post this letter.

PV: You are requested to post this letter

2. Light the lamp.

PV: let the lamp be lit/lighted

An imperative sentence in the passive voice has the following form: **Let + object + be + past participle.**

- Active: Carry it home.
- Passive: Let it be carried home.
- Active: Do it at once.
- Passive: Let it be done at once.
- Active: Open the door.
- Passive: Let the door be opened.
- Active: Throw the ball.
- Passive: Let the ball be thrown.

When the active voice is in the negative, the passive voice takes the form: **Let + object + not + be + past participle.**

- Active: Do not beat the dog.
- Passive: Let the dog not be beaten.

Note that **do** is not used in the passive form.

We can begin the passive sentence with **you** if we want to put emphasis on the person addressed to.

Compare:

- Active: Help me.
- Passive: Let me be helped.
- Passive: You are requested to help me.
- Active: Learn the poem.
- Passive: Let the poem be learned.
- Passive: You are asked to learn the poem.

- Active: Don't touch it.
- Passive: Let it not be touched.
- Passive: You are warned not to touch it.

Note that the passive form has to begin with **you** when the object of the active verb is not mentioned.

- Active: Work hard.

Here the active verb does not have an object. Therefore the passive form should begin with **you**.

- Passive: You are advised to work hard.
- Active: Get out.
- Passive: You are ordered to get out.