

## MENG321: Comparison of Active and Passive Voice

In the active voice, the subject of a sentence acts: "Neil is talking to Mary." The active voice is direct and clear. With the passive voice, the subject is acted upon: "Mary is being talked to by Neil". Although the passive voice is grammatically correct, it typically doesn't carry the same energy or clarity as the active voice. Its structure can feel clumsy or unnatural, which can make your writing harder to understand. It also uses more words than the active voice. Over the course of a document, all those extra words can be difficult for the writer and the reader.

Passive voice is used for most technical and scientific writing. Switching from the active voice to the passive voice is straightforward, but it requires practice. In the table below, notice that the tense of the verb "to be" in the passive voice is always the same as the tense of the main verb in the active voice.

### Verb Tenses Examples (using "to keep")

Verb Tense	Active Voice	Passive Voice	Active sentence	Passive Sentence
Present Simple	keep	is kept	I keep the butter in the refrigerator.	The butter is kept in the refrigerator.
Present Continuous	is keeping	is being kept	John is keeping my house clean.	My house is being kept clean.
Present Perfect	have kept	have been kept	I have kept all your old letters.	All your old letters have been kept.

## Verb Tenses Examples (using “to keep”)

Verb Tense	Active Voice	Passive Voice	Active sentence	Passive Sentence
Past Simple	kept	was kept	Mary kept her schedule updated.	Mary's schedule was kept updated.
Past Continuous	was keeping	was being kept	The theater was keeping a seat for you.	A seat was being kept for you.
Past Perfect	had kept	had been kept	He had kept up his training routine for a month.	His training routine had been kept up for a month.

Verb Tense	Active Voice	Passive Voice	Active sentence	Passive Sentence
Future Simple	will keep	will be kept	Mark will keep the flowers.	The flowers will be kept.
Future Perfect	will have kept	will have been kept	Frank will have kept the papers in the safe.	The papers will have been kept in the safe.

## Gerunds and Infinitives Examples (using “to keep”)

<b>Gerund or Infinitive</b>	<b>Active Voice</b>	<b>Passive Voice</b>	<b>Active sentence</b>	<b>Passive Sentence</b>
Simple Gerund	keeping	being kept	I have a feeling that you may be keeping a secret.	I have a feeling that a secret may be being kept.
Perfect Gerund	having kept	having been kept	Having kept the bird in a cage for so long, Jade wasn't sure it could survive in the wild.	The bird, having been kept in a cage for so long, might not survive in the wild.
Simple Infinitive	to keep	to be kept	Judy wants to keep the puppy.	The puppy wants to be kept.
Perfect Infinitive	to have kept	to have been kept	Judy was happy to have kept the puppy.	The puppy was happy to have been kept.