

# **Unit 3**

# **Active and Passive Voice**

**Semester 2 – Advanced Communication & Interpersonal Skills**  
**(03010001HM01)**

# Learning Objectives

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1. Define and distinguish between active and passive voice.
2. Identify active and passive constructions in sentences.
3. Convert sentences from active to passive and vice versa.
4. Apply correct voice usage in academic, technical, and professional writing.
5. Analyze contexts where passive voice is preferable (e.g., reports, lab documentation).

# Topics to be covered

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1. Introduction: What is Voice in Grammar?
2. Structure of Active and Passive Voice
3. Rules for Conversion
4. Voice with Tense
5. Voice with Modals
6. Voice with Imperative Sentences
7. When to Use Active and Passive Voice
8. Common Errors
9. Activities and Practice
10. Summary
11. Learning Outcomes

# Introduction: What is Voice in Grammar?

- In English grammar, **voice** refers to the **relationship between the subject and the action (verb)** in a sentence.
- It shows **whether the subject performs the action or receives the action it becomes object**.
- The form of the verb changes depending on which part of the sentence — the **doer** or the **receiver** — is emphasized.

## Engineering Example

- **Active:** *We tested the material under high temperature.*
- **Passive:** *The material was tested under high temperature.*

# Introduction: What is Voice in Grammar?

## Active Voice

- The **subject performs the action.**
- Focus is on **who/what is doing the action.**
- **Example: The engineer designed the bridge.**  
→ (Focus: *engineer*, the doer)

## Passive Voice

- The **subject receives the action.**
- Focus is on **what happened**, not who did it.
- **Example: The bridge was designed by the engineer.**  
→ (Focus: *bridge*, the result/action)

# Rules for Conversion

1. Identify Subject, Verb, and Object.
2. Move Object to the position of the Subject.
3. Use the correct form of *be* + past participle.
4. Use *by* + doer (optional if doer is unknown/irrelevant).
5. Ensure tenses are used correctly.

# Structure in Voices

Aspect	Active Voice	Passive Voice
Definition	The subject <b>performs</b> the action expressed by the verb.	The subject <b>receives</b> the action expressed by the verb.
Focus	Focus is on the <b>doer (subject)</b> of the action.	Focus is on the <b>action or receiver (object)</b> .
Structure	<b>Subject + Verb + Object</b>	<b>Object + be + past participle + (by + Subject)</b>
Verb Form	Verb is in <b>base or tense form</b> according to the subject.	Verb includes a <b>form of “be” + past participle</b> .

# Structure in Voices

Aspect	Active Voice	Passive Voice
Use In Communication	Direct, Concise, and Reinforces responsibility.	Objective, formal, emphasizes the process or result.
Typical Contexts	Instructions, emails, presentations, manuals.	Reports, research papers, technical documentation, experiments.
Example (Simple)	<i>The student wrote the report.</i>	<i>The report was written by the student.</i>
Example (Technical)	<i>Engineers tested the new alloy.</i>	<i>The new alloy was tested by engineers.</i>

# A.Voice in Tenses

<b>Tense</b>	<b>Active</b>	<b>Passive</b>
Simple Present	He writes a report.	A report is written by him.
Present Continuous	He is writing a report.	A report is being written by him.
Present Perfect	He has written a report.	A report has been written by him.
Simple Past	He wrote a report.	A report was written by him.

# Voice in Tenses

<b>Tense</b>	<b>Active</b>	<b>Passive</b>
Past Continuous	He was writing a report.	A report was being written by him.
Past Perfect	He had written a report.	A report had been written by him.
Simple Future	He will write a report.	A report will be written by him.
Future Perfect	He will have written a report.	A report will have been written by him.

# B. Voice with Modals

**Rule:** *Modal + be + past participle*

<b>Active</b>	<b>Passive</b>
She can solve the problem.	The problem can be solved by her.
Engineers must follow safety rules.	Safety rules must be followed by engineers.
You should complete the assignment.	The assignment should be completed by you.

# C. Voice with Imperative Sentences

Sentence Type	Active Form	Passive Form
<b>Positive Command</b>	Close the door.	Let the door be closed.
<b>Negative Command</b>	Don't touch the wire.	Let the wire not be touched.
<b>Request/ Instruction</b>	Please submit the report.	You are requested to submit the report.

# **When to Use Active and Passive Voice**

## **Active Voice:**

- Emphasize the doer of the action.
- Use in instructions, manuals, direct communication.

## **Passive Voice:**

- When doer is unknown, unimportant, or obvious.
- To emphasize the action/result (e.g., *The experiment was conducted successfully.*)
- Common in technical writing, lab reports, and formal documentation.

# Common Mistakes

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- Missing auxiliary verbs (*is/was/been*).
- Incorrect verb forms (*be being, has being*).
- Incorrect tenses usage.
- Using passive unnecessarily in short or direct statements.

# **Activity: Identify whether the sentence is Active or Passive.**

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1. The professor explained the concept clearly.
2. The bridge was designed by a team of civil engineers.
3. The students submitted the assignment on time.
4. The experiment was conducted in the materials lab.
5. Our company manufactures high-quality sensors.
6. The error was detected during the final testing phase.

# **Activity: Identify whether the sentence is Active or Passive.**

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1. The professor explained the concept clearly.

**Active**

1. The bridge was designed by a team of civil engineers.

**Passive**

1. The students submitted the assignment on time.

**Active**

1. The experiment was conducted in the materials lab.

**Passive**

1. Our company manufactures high-quality sensors.

**Active**

The error was detected during the final testing phase.

**Passive**

# Summary

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- Voice indicates who performs or receives the action.
- **Active:** Subject performs. **Passive:** Subject receives.
- Conversion depends on correct *be + past participle* use.
- Passive is essential for formal, scientific, and process-based writing.

# Learning Outcomes

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- Differentiate between active and passive voice.
- Convert sentences correctly between both forms.
- Apply appropriate voice in academic and technical contexts.
- Avoid common grammatical and tense-related errors.

# References

- Murphy, Raymond. *English Grammar in Use*. Cambridge University Press.
- Oxford Learner's Grammar (Online).
- Purdue OWL Grammar and Mechanics.
- BBC Learning English – *Active vs. Passive Voice*.
- Cambridge Dictionary: *Grammar and Usage*.

# Thank You