

Active voice & passive voice

Active voice	Passive voice
The surgeon removes the fibroma from the uterus.	The fibroma is removed from the uterus by the surgeon.

Active voice:

In most English sentences with an action verb, the subject *performs the action* denoted by the verb. Because the subject does or "acts upon" the verb in such sentences, the sentences are said to be in the **active voice**.

EXAMPLES :

- The pregnant lady **takes** a folic acid supplement.
- The gynecologist **prescribed** a contraceptive method.
- The patient **has experienced** vaginal bleeding.

Passive voice:

One can change the normal word order of many active sentences (those with a direct object) so that the subject is no longer *active*, but is, instead, being *acted upon* by the verb - or *passive*. Because the subject is being "acted upon" (or is *passive*), such sentences are said to be in the **passive voice**.

EXAMPLES :

- A folic acid supplement **is taken** by the pregnant lady.
- A contraceptive method **was prescribed** by the gynecologist.
- Vaginal bleeding **has been experienced** by the patient.

Use of the passive voice

1. Passive voice is used when **the focus is on the action**. It is not important or not known, however, who or what is performing the action.

EXAMPLE :

- A contraceptive method **was prescribed**.
 - Focus, here, is on the fact that a contraceptive method **was prescribed**.
 - We don't know, however, **who prescribed it**.

2. Sometimes a statement in passive is more **polite** than active voice, as the following example shows.

EXAMPLE :

- A mistake *was made*.
 - Focus, here, is on the fact that a mistake *was made*, but we don't blame anyone.
 - Compare this to: "You made a mistake."

Form of the passive voice

Subject + the appropriate form of "to be"* + past participle

* The appropriate form of "to be" = "To be" is put in the the tense of the active voice main verb.

When rewriting active sentences in passive voice, note the following:

Rule 1:

The *object* of the active sentence becomes the *subject* of the passive sentence.

Rule 2:

The form of the verb is the appropriate form of "to be" (the tense of the active voice main verb) + *the past participle*.

Rule 3:

The *subject* of the active sentence becomes the *object* of the passive sentence (or is dropped.)

EXAMPLE :

Active	The surgeon	removes	the tumor.
	Subject	Verb	Object
Passive	The tumor	is removed	(by the surgeon)
	<i>Object becoming subject</i>	Verb	<i>Subject becoming object or is dropped</i>

EXAMPLES WITH MORE TENSES:

Tense		Subject	Verb	Object
Simple present	Active	The surgeon	removes	the tumor.
	Passive	The tumor	is removed	by the surgeon.
Present progressive	Active	The surgeon	is removing	the tumor.
	Passive	The tumor	is being removed	by the surgeon.

Simple past	Active	The surgeon	removed	the tumor.
	Passive	The tumor	was removed	by the surgeon
Past progressive	Active	The surgeon	was removing	the tumor.
	Passive	The tumor	was being removed	by the surgeon.
Present perfect	Active	The surgeon	has removed	the tumor.
	Passive	The tumor	has been removed	by the surgeon.
Past perfect	Active	The surgeon	had removed	the tumor.
	Passive	The tumor	had been removed	by the surgeon
Future simple	Active	The surgeon	will remove	the tumor.
	Passive	The tumor	will be removed	by the surgeon.
Future perfect	Active	The surgeon	will have removed	the tumor.
	Passive	The tumor	will have been removed	by the surgeon.
Conditional	Active	The surgeon	would remove	the tumor.
	Passive	The tumor	would be removed	by the surgeon.
Modals	Active	The surgeon	can remove	the tumor.
	Passive	The tumor	can be removed	by the surgeon.