

Get cracking

Adam was on a hiking trip and fell asleep at the edge of a forest. When he woke up he noticed that most of his things were gone. Look at the pictures of the animals and the things they have taken. Then match the items in the table.



Column A

The French fries were taken

Adam's glasses were

The rabbit took

The banana was eaten

The monkey took

Column B

the carrot

by the deer

by the black bird

taken by the elephant

the coconut

Read the sentences below.

The dog chased the cat.

The cat was chased by the dog.

The first sentence is about the **dog**, and says what it did. The second sentence is about the **cat**, and says what happened to it. The first sentence is in the **active voice** and the second sentence is in the **passive voice**. In an active sentence the subject does the action, while in the passive sentence the action is done to the subject. The subject of the passive voice is the same as the object of the active voice.

The passive form of a verb is **be** (is, was, has been and so on) + **past participle**.

Study the table below.

Tense (or modal + base)	Active voice	Passive voice
Simple present	write/writes	is/are written
Present continuous	am/is/are writing	is/are being written
Present perfect	has/have written	has/have been written
Simple past	wrote	was/were written
Past continuous	was/were writing	was/were being written
Past perfect	had written	had been written
will/can/may/must, and so on + base	will/can/may/must write	will/can/may/must be written

Let us now note the changes in the passive and active voice according to the tenses.

Present tense

Simple present tense

Active

I *see* a golden duck.

A mule *kills* a snake.

The postman *delivers* letters.

Passive

A golden duck *is seen* by me.

A snake *is killed* by a mule.

Letters *are delivered* by the postman.

Present continuous tense

Active

The mother *is feeding* the baby.

The children *are reciting* poetry.

Passive

The baby *is being fed* by the mother.

Poetry *is being recited* by the children.

Present perfect tense

Active

The cats *have caught* all the rats.

Sanjana *has completed* the work in time.

Passive

All the rats *have been caught* by the cats.

The work *has been completed* by Sanjana in time.

Past tense

Simple past tense

Active

He *sold* his bike.

The father *praised* the son.

My brother *ate* the cake.

Passive

His bike *was sold* by him.

The son *was praised* by the father.

The cake *was eaten* by my brother.

Past continuous tense

Active

Lalita *was singing* a song.

They *were throwing* stones at the dogs.

Passive

A song *was being sung* by Lalita.

Stones *were being thrown* at the dogs by them.

Past perfect tense

Active

Someone *had stolen* my mobile.

Passive

My mobile *had been stolen* by someone.

The future

Simple future

Active

The teacher *will never punish* you for coming late.

She *will always help* you in your work.

I *shall give* her this pen.

Everyone *will laugh* at you.

Passive

You *will never be punished* by the teacher for coming late.

You *will always be helped* by her in your work.

She *will be given* this pen by me.

You *shall be laughed* at by everyone.



Note

The passive of a verb is made by adding a suitable form of *be verb* to the *past participle*.

Verbs with two objects

Verbs which take **two objects** after them in the active voice can be changed to the passive in the following ways.

Active

She gave me a card.

They gave me a car.

Granny told me a story.

She teaches us English.

The teacher gave him a prize.

Passive

I was given a card by her./A card was given to me by her.

A car was given to me by them./I was given a car by them.

I was told a story by granny./A story was told to me by granny.

We are taught English by her./English is taught to us by her.

He was given a prize by the teacher./A prize was given to him by the teacher.

Interrogative sentences

Active

Who broke this flower vase?

Why did she scold us?

How did he pass the exam?

Who teaches you English?

Which doctor will treat you?

Who will help her?

Passive

By whom was this flower vase broken?

Why were we scolded by her?

How was the exam passed by him?

By whom are you taught English?

By which doctor will you be treated?

By whom will she be helped?

Omission of the by-phrase

Read the sentences below.

Active

Everybody likes him.

They are milking the cows.

Somebody has stolen my purse.

Sarojini Naidu wrote this poem.

They were repairing the bridge.

I will return it tomorrow.

Anybody can do it.

You must pay the money right now.

Passive

He is liked by everybody.

The cows are being milked (by them).

My purse has been stolen (by somebody).

The poem was written by Sarojini Naidu.

The bridge was being repaired (by them).

It will be returned (by me) tomorrow.

It can be done by anybody.

The money must be paid (by you) right now.

In some of the passive sentences above, the **by-phrase** (by + doer of the action) is put in brackets. The by-phrase is usually omitted in such cases.

We normally leave out the by-phrase (by somebody/someone/them/you/me) in the following cases:

- when we don't know the doer of the action.
- when the doer is not important.
- when it is clear enough who the doer is.

A. Rewrite these sentences in the passive voice.

1. Bees make honey.
2. Ria is washing the clothes.
3. You must finish the work today.
4. They have invited me to the party.
5. Robots can build cars.
6. They cancelled the match.
7. I will invite both of them.
8. They had sold out the tickets by that time.
9. Sunil is cleaning the windows.
10. You may pay the money tomorrow.

honey is made by bees
Clothes were washed by Ria
The work must be finished today
I have been invited to the party
A car can be built by robots
The match was cancelled by them
I will invite both of them
The tickets had been sold out by that time
The windows are being cleaned by Sunil
The money may be paid tomorrow

B. Rewrite these sentences in the active voice.

1. This story was written by Tagore.
Tagore has written the story.
2. He is liked by the manager.
The manager likes him.
3. The tap has been turned on. (Somebody)
Someone has turned on the tap.
4. The bike is cleaned by Gopi every day.
Gopi cleans the bike every day.
5. The driver has been arrested. (The police)
The police have arrested the driver.
6. The road is being repaired. (They)
They are repairing the road.
7. The DVDs can be returned tomorrow. (You)
You can return the DVDs tomorrow.
8. The letter will be typed in a few minutes. (I)
I will type the letter in a few minutes.
9. Television was invented by Baird.
Baird invented television.
10. The dinner has been cooked by Sara.
Sara has cooked the dinner.