

Practice Writing Active Voice Sentences

When a sentence is written in active voice, the subject of the sentence does the action of the verb. Here's an example of a sentence written in active voice:

The Service Department will send you the part you need to repair your oven.

The subject of this sentence is Service Department and the verb is will send. Because the Service Department is doing the action of the verb will send, this sentence is written in active voice.

When a sentence is written in passive voice, the subject of the sentence receives the action of the verb. The subject of the sentence is passive; it is acted upon. Here is the sentence about the Service Department written in the passive voice:

The part you need to repair your oven will be sent by the Service Department.

The subject of the sentence is part and the verb is will be sent. Because the part is not doing the action of the verb will be sent, this sentence is written in passive voice.

Is passive voice bad?

Of course not. Passive voice does shape meaning, however. The passive voice sentence structure helps the reader to discover who did what to whom. And sometimes the do-er in a passive sentence is omitted entirely.

Most readers find active voice sentences easier to understand. The active voice highlights the do-er in the sentence. Sentences written in the active voice usually use fewer words, writing in active voice makes your sentences more concise.

How to tell if a sentence is written in active voice or passive voice:

1. Find the subject in the sentence. In the example below, the subject of the sentence is You.
You can request a waiver of your annual credit card fee.
2. Find the verb. In the example above, the verb is can request.
3. Ask yourself, "Is the subject of this sentence doing the action of the verb?" In our example, the subject you is doing the action of the verb can request. Therefore, the sentence is written in the active voice.

Here's the same sentence written in the passive voice:

A waiver of your annual credit card fee can be requested.

The subject waiver is not doing the action of the verb can be requested. The do-er of the action, which has been omitted from the sentence but understood, is you.

Practice: Change These Passive Voice Sentences to Active Voice Sentences

1. The rack can be used by boaters to carry the inflatable boat on the top of the car.
2. The stringent code of behavior was developed to prevent recruits from acting badly in public.
3. An unforeseen problem has been caused by an upgrade to the email servers you use.
4. The item number MID583 should be entered in the search box on our home page.
5. All residents within the chemical contamination area of concern were contacted by the government's Environmental Safety Team.
6. Rescue contests are designed by employers to sharpen lifeguards' skills and foster healthy competition.
7. The checklists on this page were provided by the certification agency to help day care centers understand how their facilities will be evaluated.
8. Approximately 100,000 young adults between 18 and 24 are released each year by state and federal jails and prisons.
9. The plan for developing new products was set by the Research and Development team.
10. The applicant's credit rating must be included in the loan application for the lender to consider it complete.

Answers: Here Are the Active Voice Versions of the Passive Voice Sentences

1. Boaters can use the rack to carry the inflatable boat on the top of the car.
2. We developed the stringent code of behavior to prevent recruits from acting badly in public.
3. An upgrade to the email services you use has caused an unforeseen problem.
4. You should enter the item number MID583 in the search box on our home page.
5. The government's Environmental Safety Team contacted all residents within the chemical contamination area of concern.
6. Employers design rescue contests to sharpen lifeguards' skills and foster healthy competition.
7. The certification agency provided the checklists on this page to help day care centers understand how their facilities will be evaluated.
8. State and federal jails and prisons release approximately 100,000 young adults between 18 and 24 each year.
9. The Research and Development team set the plan for developing new products.
10. The applicant must include their credit rating in the loan application for the lender to consider it complete.