

Passive/Active Voice Exercises Answer Key SAT

Choose the correct answer from the following options

1. Steve Jobs' father always told Steve that quality must be carried all the way through, so an obsession for the quality of things unseen was developed by Steve.
 - a. NO CHANGE
 - b. so the quality of things unseen as an obsession was developed by Steve.
 - c. **so Steve developed an obsession for the quality of things unseen.**
 - d. so the unseen things' quality became an obsession developed by Steve.

Choice C is the best answer because it changes the clause from a passive voice to an active voice by making it so that the subject "Steve" is the one performing the action "developed..." rather than the subject receiving an action.

2. Paleontologists and archaeologists are easily confused with each other because their works seem to overlap with each other. Culture and human remains are studied by archaeologists while past life in a geological setting is studied by paleontologists.
 - a. NO CHANGE
 - b. **Archaeologists study culture and human remains while Paleontologists study past life in a geological setting.**
 - c. Archaeologists study culture and human remains while past life in a geological setting is studied by paleontologists.
 - d. Culture and human remains are studied by archaeologists while paleontologists study past life in a geological setting.

Choice B is the correct answer because it correctly uses the active voice for both archaeologists and paleontologists. It also maintains the parallel in sentence structure.

3. Billy tried to make an excuse when he couldn't find his homework, but he was still scolded by his teacher.
 - a. NO CHANGE
 - b. **his teacher still scolded him.**
 - c. scolding was still done to him by his teacher.
 - d. he still was scolded by his teacher.

Sentence begins in an active voice (the subject performs the action) and switches to a passive voice (the subject receives the action). Keep the sentence in an active voice by changing it so that the teacher scolded Billy rather than Billy was scolded by the teacher.

4. Many customers of the bakery found the bread too dry to eat, but it was still ordered everyday.
 - a. NO CHANGE
 - b. **they still ordered it everyday.**
 - c. still, it was ordered everyday.
 - d. everyday it was ordered.

Sentence begins in an active voice (the subject performs the action) and switches to a passive voice (the subject receives the action). Keep the sentence in an active voice by changing it so that “they” (the customers) are ordering the bread rather than “it” (the bread) is being ordered by the customers.

5. In order to meet the deadline, a calculator was used by John for the math calculations.
- NO CHANGE
 - the math calculations were done on a calculator by John.
 - John used a calculator for the math calculations**
 - John calculated the math calculations with a calculator.

Dangling modifier caused by the use of a passive voice. It is not the calculator that is trying to meet the deadline, it is John.

6. After the professor gave Michael the paper, he walked away angrily.
- NO CHANGE
 - they
 - one
 - Michael**

The pronoun “he” is vague. “He” can be referring to either the professor or to Michael, so the reference must be stated explicitly.

7. Since I was a baby, my mother would always sing me a song that her mother sang to her. She told me that the message in the song has been passed down for generations to celebrate its beauty.
- NO CHANGE
 - our world’s**
 - that it’s
 - it’s

It is not clear what “it” is. In all of the options, “it” is not clearly defined. Only option B states exactly what “it” is referring to (our world).

8. I was sitting behind a young boy who was doing math homework in a baseball cap with a calculator.
- NO CHANGE
 - I was sitting behind a young boy in a baseball cap doing math homework with a calculator.**
 - I was sitting in a baseball cap behind a young boy who was doing math homework with a calculator.
 - I was sitting behind a young boy who was doing math homework with a calculator in a baseball cap.

It is the young boy who is wearing the baseball cap, not “I” or the math homework or the calculator. “In a baseball cap” is a modifier that should be placed directly after what it is modifying.

9. Adding a pinch of salt to the cookie was already known to be the key to a more delectable dessert by Samantha. Unfortunately, she ran out of salt and had no choice but to add sugar only.
- a. NO CHANGE
 - b. As Samantha already knew, that a pinch of salt was the key to a more delectable dessert.
 - c. **Samantha already knew that adding a pinch of salt was the key to a more delectable dessert.**
 - d. The key to a more delectable dessert, Samantha already knew that it was to add a pinch of salt.

The underlined sentence uses a passive voice and puts the noun (Samantha) at the end of the sentence. Although not grammatically incorrect, it is confusing to read. In option B, the pronoun “that” is vague. For option D, we have an incorrect use of a dangling modifier. Option C is written in an active voice (Samantha performs the action), and thus the best option.

10. After the doctor confined Jim to bed rest for a week, he had to think of ways to entertain himself that didn’t require physical movement.
- a. **NO CHANGE**
 - b. Confined to bed rest for a week, Jim
 - c. For a week, Jim was confined to bed rest, he
 - d. When Jim was confined to bed rest for a week, he

The underlined sentence is already in an active voice. Both options b and c are written in a passive voice. Option c is choppy and sounds awkward. In general, the active voice is preferred over the passive voice as it makes leaves little ambiguity. For example, in options b and c, it is unclear as to *who* confined Jim to bed rest .

11. Seeking to tell her mom about the broken window without getting in trouble, a friend was asked to break the news and take the blame.
- a. NO CHANGE
 - b. a friend broke the news and took the blame.
 - c. the blame was placed on a friend when she broke the news to her mother.
 - d. **Sally asked a friend to break the news and take the blame.**

Dangling modifier caused by the use of a passive voice. It is not clear who was seeking to tell her mother about the broken window (Sally).

12. During the Manifest Destiny, a term coined by John O'Sullivan, two families were led on a long and dangerous voyage to California by George Donner and James Reed.

- a. NO CHANGE
- b. two families being led on a long and dangerous voyage to California by George Donner and James Reed.
- c. **George Donner and James Reed led two families on a long and dangerous voyage to California.**
- d. a dangerous voyage to California on which George Donner and James Reed led two families.

Choice C is the best answer. Choices B and D are incorrect because they sound awkward. Choice A is incorrect because it is written in a passive voice.

13. By boiling river water for at least 1 minute, the harmful bacteria and protozoa will be killed or inactivated in order to make the water drinkable.

- a. NO CHANGE
- b. by killing or inactivating the harmful bacteria and protozoa
- c. they will kill or inactivate the harmful bacteria and protozoa
- d. **you can kill or inactivate the harmful bacteria and protozoa**

Choice D keeps the underlined portion of the sentence in active while keeping the meaning intact.