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INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
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ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICE

A path to effective writing

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Introduction

- In English grammar, verbs have five properties: voice, mood, tense, person, and number. Here, we are concerned with voice.

- **What is a voice?**

Voice is a form of a verb indicates whether the subject of the verb performs or receives the action.

- The two grammatical voices are:
- **Active voice and Passive voice.**



Active Voice

- In most English sentences with an action verb, the subject performs the action denoted by the **verb**.

- **Examples:**

1. Abhinav mailed the letter.

Abhinav (subject) is doing the mailing (verb)

2. The man must have eaten five apples.

The man (subject) is doing the eating (verb)

- Because the subject does or "acts upon" the verb in such sentences, these sentences are said to be in the **active voice**.



Passive Voice

□ In a passive voice construction, the grammatical subject of the clause *receives* the action of the verb.

□ **Examples:**

1. The letter was mailed by Abhinav

The letter (subject) was being mailed (verb)

2. Five apples must have been eaten by the man.

Apples (subject) are being eaten (verb)

Because the subject is being "acted upon" (or is *passive*), such sentences are said to be in the **passive voice**.

How do Active and Passive Voice Differ?

- Active voice is direct
 - The subject directly acts on the object
 - The tone is clear and immediate

Ex: As if you throw a ball directly at a target, the target gets all the force of the ball

- Passive voice is indirect
 - The subject is acted ON by the object
 - The tone is roundabout

Ex: As if you bounce a ball on a wall to hit a target, the wall and the target both get some of the force of the ball. So the impact is not as strong or clear



Sentence structures

□ Construction of the Active voice

- Subject (doer) + verb + object

Example: Cat eat fish

□ Construction of the Passive voice

- Subject + auxiliary verb (be) + main verb (past participle)

Example: Fish is eaten by cat

- Subject + modal verb + auxiliary verb (be) + main verb (past participle)

Example: Fish must be eaten by cat

When to use passive voice?

- ✓ When intentionally trying to hide the subject of the sentence.
- ✓ Example; “The mistake was made by someone.”
Hiding the subject helps him/her hide the blame.
- ✓ When intentionally trying to minimize the guilt of the subject.
- ✓ Example: “Cheating was committed by me.”
- ✓ When passive voice better emphasizes the main point of the message, such as “Children were harmed by the drunken driver.”

Passive voice verbs

- The passive voice requires a "double verb" and will always consist of a form of the verb "to be" and the past participle (usually the "en/ed/t" form) of another verb.

- **Example:**

Active: John baked the bread.

Passive: The bread was baked by John. (Was is a form of the verb "be".)

- **Writers should be familiar with the forms of "to be":**
✓ *am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been*



Cont..

- Note the forms of "to be" in the examples of the verb "to kick" in various forms of the passive voice:

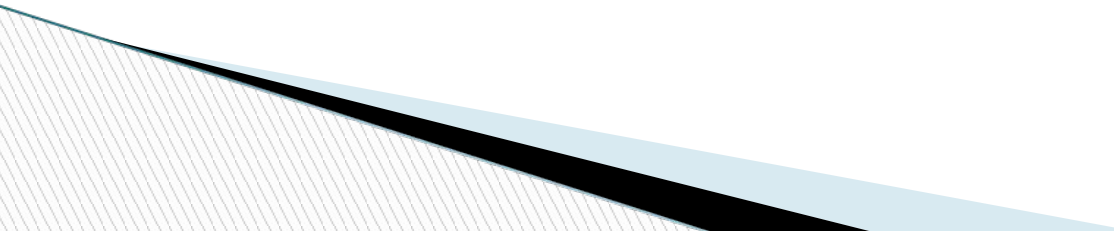
is kicked-----had been kicked
was kicked-----is going to be kicked
is being kicked-----will be kicked
has been kicked-----can be kicked
was being kicked-----should be kicked

- Examples:

- Passive: The cookies were eaten by the children.
- Active: The children ate the cookies.
- Passive: The tunnels are dug by the crew.
- Active: The crew dug the tunnels.

Let's Practice

Label the following sentences ACTIVE or PASSIVE.

1. Louise made the chocolate cake.
 2. The chocolate cake was made by Louise.
 3. The package was advertised by the travel agent.
 4. The travel agent advertised the package.
 5. The chain was broken by my brother.
 6. My brother broke the chain on my bike.
 7. I hemmed the prom dress.
 8. The prom dress was hemmed by me.
 9. The pencil on the floor was broken by him.
 10. He broke the pencil on the floor.
- 

The form of active and passive voice in Tenses

□ Simple present tense:

Active: He reads a novel.

Passive: A novel is read.

Active: He does not cook food.

Passive: Food is not cooked by him.

Active Voice	Passive Voice (Auxiliary Verb – is/am/are)
Subject + V1+s/es+ object	Object+ is/am/are+ V3+ by + subject
Subject + Do/does+ not + V1 + Object	Object + is/am/are+ not + V3+ by Subject
Does+ Subject+ V1+Object+?	Is/am/are + Object+ V3+ by subject +?

Present Continuous Tense

Active: Esha is singing a song.

Passive: A song is being sung by Esha.

Active: Kritika is not chopping vegetables.

Passive: Vegetables are not being chopped by Kritika.

Active Voice	Passive Voice (Auxiliary Verb- is/am/are + being)
Subject + is/am/are+ v1+ ing + object	Object+ is/am/are+ being+ V3+ by + subject
Subject + is/am/are+ not+ v1+ ing+ object	Object + is/am/are+ not + being+V3+ by Subject
Is/am/are+ subject+v1+ing + object+?	Is/am/are + Object+ V3+ by subject +?

Present Perfect Tense

- **Active:** Nitesh has challenged her.
- **Passive:** She has been challenged by Nitesh.

- **Active:** Radhika has not written an article.
- **Passive:** An article has not been written by Radhika.

Active Voice	Passive Voice (Auxiliary Verb- has/have +been)
Subject + has/have+ v3+ object	Object+ has/have+ been+ V3+ by + subject
Subject + has/have+ not+ v3+ object	Object + has/have+ not + been+V3+ by Subject
Has/have+ subject+ v3 + object+?	Has/Have + Object+ been+V3+ by subject +?

Simple Past Tense

- **Active:** Reema cleaned the floor.
- **Passive:** The floor was cleaned by Reema.

- **Active:** Aisha bought a bicycle.
- **Passive:** A bicycle was bought by Aisha.

Active Voice	Passive Voice (Auxiliary Verb- was/were)
Subject + V2+ object	Object+ was/were V3+ by + subject
Subject +did+ not+v1+ object	Object + was/were+ not +V3+ by Subject
Did+ subject+V1+ object+?	Was/were + Object+ V3+ by subject +?

Past Continuous Tense

- **Active:** Nitika was painting the wall.
- **Passive:** The wall was being painted by Nitika.

- **Active:** Manish was repairing the car.
- **Passive:** The car was being repaired by Manish.

Active Voice	Passive Voice (Auxiliary Verb- was/were + being)
Subject + was/were + v1+ing+ object.	Object+ was/were +being+V3+ by + subject
Subject +was/were+ not+v1+ing + object	Object + was/were+ not +being+V3+ by Subject
Was/were+ Subject + V1+ing + object+?	Was/were + Object+ being+v3+ by+ subject+?

Past Perfect Tense

- ❑ **Active:** Misha had cleaned the floor.
- ❑ **Passive:** The floor had been cleaned by Misha.

- ❑ **Active:** Vidhi had not received the parcel.
- ❑ **Passive:** The parcel had not been received by Vidhi.

Active Voice	Passive Voice (Auxiliary Verb- had +been)
Subject + had + v3+ object.	Object+ had+been +V3+ by + subject
Subject +had+ not+v3+ object	Object + had+ not +been+V3+ by Subject
Had+ Subject + V3+ object+?	Had + Object+ been+v3+ by+ subject+?

Simple Future Tense

- **Active:** Kriya will sew the bag.
- **Passive:** The bag will be sewed by Kriya.

- **Active:** Disha will not arrange the things.
- **Passive:** The things will not be arranged by Disha.

Active Voice	Passive Voice (Auxiliary Verb- will+ be)
Subject + will+ v1+ object.	Object+ will+ be +V3+ by + subject
Subject +will + not+ V1+object	Object + will+ not +be+V3+ by Subject
Will+ Subject + V1+ object+?	Will + Object+ be +v3+ by+ subject+?

Future Perfect Tense

- ❑ **Active:** They will have brought the toy.
- ❑ **Passive:** The toy will have been brought by them.

- ❑ **Active:** Nimesh will not have changed the table cover.
- ❑ **Passive:** The table cover will not have been changed by Nimesh.

Active Voice	Passive Voice
Subject + will+ have +v3+ object.	Object+ will+ have+ been +V3+ by + subject
Subject + will+ have +not+v3+ object.	Object + will+ have +not+been+v3+ subject
Will+ Subject+have+v3+ object+?	Will + object+have+been+v3+by +subject+?

Impersonal Passive voice

- The impersonal passive is a formal way of reporting thoughts, saying, beliefs and opinions.
- Some times we have to report events, opinions and comments that we don't assume as our own.
- Used in research papers
- So we introduce these statements:
 - ✓ People say that... It is said that
 - ✓ Everybody knows that... It is known that
 - ✓ They believed that... It is believed that

Cont..

□ It is said that....

[It + passive verb (be + past participle) + that clause]

- Example:
- They report the defense minister is to resign
- It is reported that the defense minister is to resign

□ To infinitive impersonal passives

□ The subject + passive verb (be + past participle) + to infinitive


- Example:
- It is claimed that the terrorist is living abroad
- The terrorist is claimed to be living abroad

Examples of Impersonal Passive


- ✓ People say that children are afraid of ghosts.
- ✓ It is said that children are afraid of ghosts.
- ✓ People say that this orchestra is the best in the world.
- ✓ This orchestra is said to be the best in the world.
- ✓ They think that he will be attending the meeting.
- ✓ He is thought to be attending the meeting.
- ✓ People say that Mr. Brown owns a lot of land in the north.
- ✓ Mr. Brown is said to own a lot of land in the north.

Exercises

□ Rewrite the sentences and make them passive:

1. They don't expect you to win the match.
 2. He will finish the puzzle by tomorrow.
 3. The judge has sentenced many criminals in his career.
 4. Millions of people around the world love football.
 5. They are tearing down the old bridge at the moment.
 6. Has anyone opened these letters?
 7. The boys pushed Tom into the river.
 8. They say he is an excellent pianist.
 9. They gave him a new outfit for the performance.
 10. What are they going to ask him?
- 

ANSWERS

1. You are not expected to win the match.
 2. The puzzle will be finished by tomorrow.
 3. Many criminals have been sentenced by the judge in his career.
 4. Football is loved by millions of people around the world.
 5. The old bridge is being torn down at the moment.
 6. Have these letters been opened?
 7. Tom was pushed into the river by the boys.
 8. He is said to be an excellent pianist.
 9. He was given a new outfit for the performance.
 10. What is he going to be asked?
- 



References

- <https://www.englishpage.com/verbpage/activepassive.html>
- <https://webapps.towson.edu/ows/activepass.htm>
- <http://www.watchknowlearn.org/Video.aspx?VideoID=25187&CategoryID=3564>

The background features a dark, textured surface with a grid-like pattern. On the left, there are two overlapping diamond shapes with black outlines and white inner borders. The top diamond shows a blue sky with white clouds, and the bottom diamond shows a blue, textured surface. A teal-colored horizontal band is positioned on the right side of the image.

THANK Y