

Passive and Active Voice Verbs

The concept of active and passive voice only applies to *transitive verbs*.

transitive verb—a verb that requires a direct object

Voice is the form a transitive verb takes to indicate whether the subject of the verb performs or receives the action.

When the subject of a verb performs the action, the verb is in the *active voice*. When the subject of the verb receives the action, the verb is in the *passive voice*.

Use passive voice sparingly in your writing. While revising or proofreading, you should take note of all passive constructions in your writing. If there is no logical or stylistic reason for a passive voice construction, convert it to active voice.

The grammatical form of a passive voice verb is *be* + **the past participle**.

In the passive voice, the performer of the action is often left out of the sentence. When it is in the sentence it is in a prepositional phrase.

Examples:

Active Voice: The blazing fire **destroyed** the outside walls.

Passive Voice: The outside walls **were destroyed** by the blazing fire.

Passive Voice (performer of the action not given): The outside walls **were destroyed**.

Active Voice: She **grows** corn on her farm.

Passive Voice: Corn **is grown** by her on her farm.

Passive Voice (performer of the action not given): Corn **is grown** on her farm.

Directions

Rewrite each sentence so that it is in the active voice.

Exercises with Answers

1. The idea of hunting the dinosaur was abandoned by Eckels. (passive)

Eckels abandoned the idea of hunting the dinosaur. (active)

2. The dinosaur's footsteps could be heard and felt by the hunters. (passive)

The hunters could hear and feel the dinosaur's footsteps. (active)

3. The silence was shattered by the dinosaur's scream. (passive)

The dinosaur's scream shattered the silence. (active)

4. This story has been reviewed favorably by most students. (passive)

Most students have reviewed this story favorably. (active)

5. "A sound of Thunder" was written by Ray Bradbury. (passive)

Ray Bradbury wrote "A Sound of Thunder." (active)

6. We were shown by our art teacher some prints of Lucia Wilcox's artwork. (passive)

Our art teacher showed us some prints of Lucia Wilcox's artwork. (active)

Exercises and Answers from 10/9

Directions: Transform all passive voice constructions to active voice.

1. The ball was hit out of the park by him. (passive)

He hit the ball out of the park. (active)

2. The door was unlocked by me. (passive)

I unlocked the door. (active)

3. The coffee is ground daily by them. (passive)

They ground the coffee daily. (active)

4. My homework was eaten by my dog. (passive)

My dog ate my homework. (active)

5. The passive voice should be used sparingly by you. (passive)

You should use the passive voice sparingly. (active)

6. The bridge was damaged by rushing water. (passive)

The rushing water damaged the bridge. (active)