

Active and Passive Voice

In grammar, **voice** communicates whether the subject of a clause performs or receives the action of the verb.

If a sentence is written in **active voice**, the subject *performs* the action of the verb.

→ Leah watered the plant on Saturday.

If a sentence is written in **passive voice**, the subject *receives* the action of the verb.

→ The plant was watered on Saturday.



Note that active and passive voice emphasize different aspects of a sentence. In the examples above, the **active** sentence places importance on who watered the plant. In the **passive** sentence, the action of the sentence is emphasized. It's important that the plant was watered, but it doesn't really matter who watered it. Look at a few more examples of active vs. passive voice below.

Active	Passive
The mechanic is repairing the vending machine.	The vending machine is being repaired.
Did someone break the world record?	Has the world record been broken?
Congress just passed a new energy bill.	A new energy bill has just been passed.

Though there are exceptions, it is best to use active voice in formal writing.

Directions: Write whether each sentence is written in active or passive voice.

- 1
Zane is giving all his old comic books to his stepbrother.
active
- 2
The first electric battery, called a voltaic pile, was invented by Alessandro Volta in 1800.
passive
- 3
Who borrowed my copy of *The Hobbit*?
active
- 4
My sister's softball game was delayed by the unexpected downpour.
passive
- 5
Argentines have danced the tango for almost two hundred years.
active
- 6
Unfortunately, Fiona's package had been delivered to the wrong apartment.
passive
- 7
More than 100 trees will have been planted before the park opening.
passive
- 8
The Rivertones are likely to win the top prize at the regional show choir competition.
active
- 9
Will classes be cancelled due to the winter storm?
passive
- 10
The Mayan ruins at Tikal were named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979.
passive
- 11
Mr. Anchor's students must turn in their final ceramics projects before class.
active
- 12
The student council will have cleaned up the gym before the next basketball game.
active