

Active and Passive Voice

LANGUAGE STRUCTURES

Sentence construction: Active and Passive Voice

Paper 1, Question 5, 10 marks in your pocket if you get it right! Revise your skills by following a few simple steps to rewrite sentences from active to passive voice. You must also be able to rewrite from passive to active voice. It is almost like turning a jersey inside out: the same jersey, just the other way round.

You should:

- Never change the meaning of the sentence. It is only the emphasis that shifts.
- Never change the tense of the sentence – you only modify it a bit.
- Follow the recipe for each of the different tenses.
- Try the activity first before you check the suggested answers.

Why do we write in the passive voice?

- Newspaper and television or radio headlines use passive voice to make the relevant information the focus by placing it in the beginning of the sentence. Here are a few headlines examples:



Let us write them out as full sentences. Do you see that the headlines are not very dramatic if they are written in the active voice?

The **ANC** gets knocked off its high horse.

- They knocked the ANC off its high horse.

A **protesting student** was shot dead.

- The police shot a protesting student dead.

A **hostage inmate's** parole was denied.

- The court denied the hostage inmate's parole.

- You can be more impersonal in your statements. The sentences are more dramatic (maybe a bit mysterious!) in the passive voice. We use this form when we do not wish to accuse anybody.

All my chocolates have been eaten!

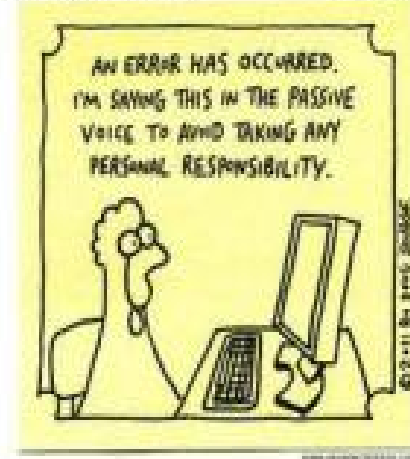
- Someone ate all my chocolates!

The books have been taken from the teacher's table.

- Someone took the books from the teacher's table.

Savage Chickens

by Doug Savage



Here is the recipe for converting sentences:

V1 = present tense V2= past tense V3 = past perfect

Tense	Active Voice	Passive Voice
Simple Present Tense	Sub + <u>V¹</u> + Obj	Obj + <u>am/is/are</u> + V ³ + by + Obj.Pronoun
Simple Past Tense	Sub + <u>V²</u> + Obj	Obj + <u>was/were</u> + V ³ + by + Obj.Pronoun
Simple Future Tense	Sub + <u>shall/will</u> + V ¹ + Obj	Obj + <u>shall/will</u> + <u>be</u> + V ³ + by + Obj.Pronoun
Present Continuous Tense	Sub + <u>am/is/are</u> + V ¹ + <u>ing</u> + Obj	Obj + <u>am/is/are</u> + <u>being</u> + V ³ + by + Obj.Pronoun
Past Continuous Tense	Sub + <u>was/were</u> + V ¹ + <u>ing</u> + Obj	Obj + <u>was/were</u> + <u>being</u> + V ³ + by + Obj.Pronoun
Future Continuous Tense	Sub + <u>shall/will</u> + <u>be</u> + V ¹ + <u>ing</u> + Obj	Obj + <u>shall/will</u> + <u>being</u> + V ³ + by + Obj.Pronoun
Present Perfect Tense	Sub + <u>have/has</u> + V ³ + Obj	Obj + <u>have/has</u> + <u>been</u> + V ³ + by + Obj.Pronoun
Past Perfect Tense	Sub + <u>had</u> + V ³ + Obj	Obj + <u>had</u> + <u>been</u> + V ³ + by + Obj.Pronoun
Future Perfect Tense	Sub + <u>shall/will</u> + <u>have</u> + V ³ + Obj	Obj + <u>shall/will</u> + <u>have</u> + <u>been</u> + V ³ + by + Obj.Pronoun

Example:

The teacher (subject) marked (V2) the tests (object).

The tests (object) were marked (was/were + V3) by (+ by) the teacher (pronoun/object – the subject in the active voice sentence).

Rewrite the sentences below in either active or passive voice

1. Mr Ramaphosa ordered all South Africans to stay at home.
2. The learners will study English online.
3. The schools were closed by the principals.
4. They are planting vegetables.
5. Schools holidays have been cancelled by the Education Department.
6. Study all the work!