

ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICE

1. A Transitive Verb has two voices, the **Active** and the **Passive**.

Voice is that form of the Verb which shows whether what is denoted by the Subject does something or has something done to it.

2. A verb is in the **Active Voice** when its form shows that the person or thing denoted by the Subject does something; or, in other words, -Is the doer of the action.

Tom helps John.

In this sentence, form of the Verb shows that the person denoted by the Subject **does** something.

Tom (the person denoted by the Subject) does something.

The Verb helps. is, therefore, said to be in the Active Voice.

The Active. Voice is so called because the person denoted by the Subject acts.

3. A verb is in the **Passive Voice** when its form shows that something is done to the person or thing denoted by the Subject.

John is helped by Tom.

In this sentence, the form of the Verb shows that something **is done to the person** denoted by the Subject.

Something is done to John (the person denoted by the Subject).

The Verb is helped is, therefore, said to be in the Passive Voice.

The Passive Voice is so called because the person or thing denoted by the Subject is not active but passive, that is, suffers or receives some action.

4. When a sentence is changed from the Active form to the Passive, the Object to the Active Verb becomes the Subject to the Passive Verb. Note this change in the following sentences

Object to Active Verb

Subject to Passive Verb

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Sita loves Savitri. | 1. Savitri is loved by Sita. |
| 2. The mason is building the wall. | 2. The wall is being built by the mason. |
| 3. The peon opened the gate. | 3. The gate was opened by the peon. |
| 4. Some boys were helping the wounded man. | 4. The wounded man was being helped by some boys. |
| 5. He will finish the work in a fortnight. | 5. The work will be finished by him in a fortnight. |
| 6. Who did this ? | 6. By whom was this done ? |
| 7. Why did your brother write such a letter ? | 7. Why was such a letter written by your brother ? |

[In sentence 1, Savitri which is the Object of loves in the Active Voice, becomes the Subject of is loved in the Passive Voice.]

5. Since the Object of a verb in the active voice becomes the Subject of the passive form, it follows that only Transitive Verbs can be used in the Passive Voice.
6. The Active Voice is used when the doer (or the Subject) is to be made prominent. The Passive Voice is used when the person or thing acted upon (or the Object) is to be made prominent.

The Passive Voice is, therefore, generally preferred when the active form would involve the use of an unknown or vague pronoun or noun (somebody, they, people, we, one, etc.) as the subject ; as-

1. My book has been stolen. (Somebody has stolen my book.)
2. He was asked his name. (They asked him his name.)
3. English is spoken all over the world. (People speak English all over the world.)
4. She has been invited to the party. (Someone has invited her to the party.)
5. Duty must be done. (One must do one's duty.)

In such cases the agent with by is usually avoided.

7. The agent of a verb in the Passive Voice should be avoided when

(1) It is understood from the rest of the sentence ; as

There was a loud explosion, and all the windows were shattered.

(Here 'by the explosion' is understood.)

(2) We can infer it; as

The thief has now awoken.

(Here we infer that the arrest was made by the police.)

(3) The agent is of no interest to us; as

The wine has been diluted.

(Here we are not interested in who diluted it, but merely in the fact of its having been diluted.)

Note, however, that the by-phrase cannot be avoided where agent has some importance and is necessary to complete the sense.

8. Verbs which take two objects (i.e., Direct and Indirect) after the verb in the Active Voice, can use either of the two as a subject of the Passive verb and retain the other as the object.

Active

Passive

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. The gatekeeper refused him admittance. | Admittance was refused him (to him) by the gatekeeper. |
| | He was refused admittance by the gatekeeper. |
| 2. Mr. Robert teaches us grammar. | Grammar is taught us (to us) by Mr. Robert. |
| | We are taught grammar by Mr. Robert. |
| 3. The manager will give you a ticket. | A ticket will be given you (to you) by the manager. |
| | You will be given a ticket by the manager. |
| 4. Who taught you French ? | By whom was French taught you (to you) ? |
| | By whom were you taught French ? |
| 5. He handed her a chair. | A chair was handed her (to her). |
| | She was handed a chair. |

INTERCHANGE OF VOICE

9. Remember the following table for the Passive forms of verbs corresponding to their Active forms :

Active Verbs

Passive Verbs

1. Present Indefinite Tense

V_1

is / am / are + V_3

2. Past Indefinite Tense

V_2 was / were + V_3

3. Future Indefinite Tense

will / shall + V_1 will/ shall + be + V_3

4. Present Continuous Tense

is / am / are + V_1 -ing is / am are + being + V_3

5. Past Continuous Tense

was/were + V_1 -ing was / were + being + V_3

6. Present Perfect Tense

has / have + V_3 has / have + been + V_3

7 Past Perfect Tense

had + V_3 had been + V_3

8. Future Perfect Tense

will/ shall have + V_3 will/shall + have been + V_3

10. Carefully study the following table of Tense of the Verb to love.

		Simple	Continuous	Perfect	Perfect Continuous
Present	Active	I love.	I am loving.	I have loved.	I have been loving.
	Passive	I am loved	I am being loved.	I have been loved.	☐
Past	Active	I loved.	I was loving.	I had loved.	I had been loving.
	Passive	I was loved.	I was being loved.	I had been loved.	☐
Future	Active	I shall love.	I shall be loving	I shall have loved	I shall have been loving.
	Passive	I shall be loved	☐	I shall have been loved.	☐

It will be seen that there are twelve tenses in the Active Voice, and eight in the Passive.

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11. Examples of Present Indefinite Tense :

Active Voice

Passive Voice

1. She helps the poor.
2. We expect good news.
3. I know him.
4. Radha does not sing a song.
5. Who teaches you English ?
6. What do you want ?
1. The poor **are helped** by her.
2. Good news **is expected** by us.
3. He is known to me.
4. A song is not sung by Radha.
5. By whom are you **taught** English ?
6. What is wanted by you ?

-EXERCISE

Change the voice of the following sentences

1. The mother manages the house.
2. He grows wheat in his field.
3. This pot contains milk.
4. The rich hate the poor.
5. I do not know the reason of his coming.
6. He does not make any noise.
7. I don't know anything at all.
8. Why do you not help him '?
9. What does he say '?
10. My father sends me money every month.
11. Our grocer sells a special kind of tea.
12. Do careless drivers cause accidents ?

Example 'Indefinite Tense :

Active Voice

Passive Voice

1. She kept us waiting.
2. I employed two hundred men.
3. The hunter did not aim at the bird.
4. Did he give you anything ?
5. Who lent you this book ?
6. Which picture did you see last night ?
1. We were kept waiting by her.
2. Two hundred men were employed by me.
3. The bird **was not aimed** at by the hunter.
4. Was anything **given** to you by him ?
5. By whom **were** you **lent** this book ?
6. Which picture was **seen** by you last night ?

-,EXERCISE.-

Change the voice of the following sentences

1. We refused them admission.
1. I forgave him his fault.
2. He watched the sports.
1. Sohrab gave Rustam a brave fight.
1. They took no notice of me.
1. Where did you find this book ?
2. Did Sita paint this picture '?
9. Why did the teacher punish him ?

10. The dentist pulled out one of my teeth.
11. The policeman caught the thief.
12. The postman gave me two letters.
0. Examples of Future Indefinite Tense :

Active Voice Passive Voice

1. I shall buy this pen. 1. This pen will be bought by me.
2. I will not take the test. 2. ' The test shall not be taken by me.
3. He will do his duty. 3. His duty will be done by him.
4. Will he not mend his ways ? 4. Will his ways not be mended by him ?
5. Which book will you read tomorrow ? 5. Which book will be read by you tomorrow ?
6. Who will answer this question ? 6. By whom will this question be answered ?

EXERCISE Change the voice of the following sentences

1. The police will look into the matter.
2. The teacher will teach us a lesson
3. The boys will catch birds.
4. Will you look after her
5. Will your uncle pay your school fees ?
6. How will you settle the matter ?
7. Who will advise him ?
8. When shall I see you again ?
9. What will you do after passing the examination ?
10. Mohan will meet you at the station.
11. My uncle will visit us tomorrow.
12. I shall mail this packet to her.
14. Examples of Present Continuous Tense :

Active Voice Passive Voice

1. The gardener is plucking flowers. 1. Flowers are being plucked by the gardener.
2. He is driving a motor car. 2. A motor car is being **driven** by him.
3. Boys are, flying kites. 3. Kites are being flown by boys.
4. Is she reading a book ? 4. **Is** a book being **read** by her ?
5. Why are you wasting your time ? 5. Why is your time being wasted by you ?
6. Who is laughing at the beggar ? 6. By whom is the beggar being **laughed** at ?

15. Examples of Past Continuous Tense :

Active Voice Passive Voice

1. **The** hunter was shooting the lion. 1. The lion was being **shot** by the hunter.
2. She was milking the cow. 2. The cow was **being milked** by her.
3. The peon was ringing the bell. 3. The bell was **being rung** by the peon.

4. The farmer was not ploughing the field. 4. The field was not being **ploughed** by the fanner.
5. Were they learning their lesson ? 5. Was their lesson being learnt by them
6. What was Sohan doing ? 6. What was being **done** by Sohan ?

16. Examples of Present Perfect Tense :

Active Voice Passive Voice

1. I have done my duty. 1. My duty **has been done** by me.
2. She has sold **the** cow. 2. Her cow **has been sold** by **her**.
3. I have not broken the window-pane. 3. The window-pane **has not been broken** by me.
4. Have you ever seen a lion ? 4. Has a lion ever been **seen** by you ?
5. Why has Sohan not finished **his** work ? 5. Why **has** his work not been finished by Sohan ?
6. Who has stolen my pencil ? 6. By whom has my pencil **been stolen** ?

17. Examples of Past Perfect Tense :

Active Voice Passive Voice

1. They had already opened the gate. 1. The gate had already been **opened** by them.
2. We had never visited Amritsar before. 2. Amritsar had never been visited by us before.
3. Had you ever seen this place before ? 3. Had this place ever been **seen** by you before ?
4. Who had invited you to the feast ? 4. By whom had you been invited to the feast ?
5. Had he finished his work by 4 p.m. ? 5. Had his work been finished by him by 4 pm ?

1. The shopkeeper had already opened the bottle—

18. Examples of Future Perfect Tense

Active Voice Passive Voice

1. I shall have planted a tree. 1. A tree will **have been** planted by **me**.
2. He will have read this book. 2. This book will **have been read** by him.
3. He will have sold his house. 3. His house will **have** been sold by him.
4. She will have taken the test. 4. The test will have been taken by her.
5. Will he have written a letter ? 5. Will a letter **have been written** by him ?

19. Examples of Imperative Sentences :

Active Voice Passive Voice

1. Shut **the** door. 1. The door **should be shut**.
2. Obey your parents. 2. **Let** your parents **be obeyed**.
3. Carry it home. 3. **Let** it be carried home.
4. Never tell a **lie**. 4. **A lie should** never be told.
5. Let him play the match. 5. **He should be allowed to play the match**.
6. Please bring me a glass of water. 6. **You are requested to bring me** a glass of water.