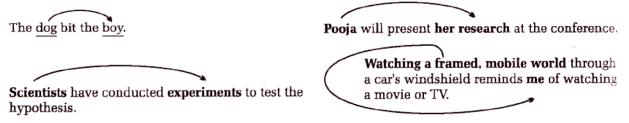
# Voice

## **Active Voice**

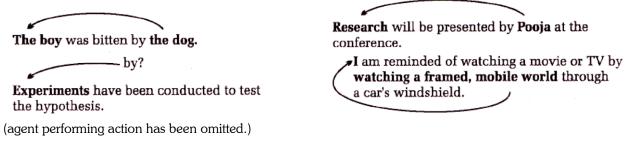
In sentences written in active voice, the subject performs the action expressed in the verb; the subject acts.



In each example above, the subject of the sentence performs the action expressed in the verb.

### **Passive Voice**

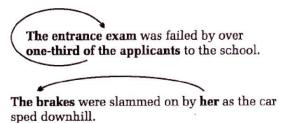
In sentences written in passive voice, the subject receives the action expressed in the verb; the subject is acted upon. The agent performing the action may appear in a "by the ..." phrase or may be omitted.



#### **Choosing Active Voice**

In most non-scientific writing situations, active voice is preferred over passive for the majority of your sentences. Even in scientific writing, overuse of passive voice or use of passive voice in long and complicated sentences can cause readers to lose interest or to become confused. Sentences in active voice are generally—though not always—clearer and more direct than those in passive voice.

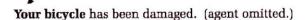
Passive (indirect) active (direct):



by?

Over one-third of the applicants to the school failed the entrance exam.

**She** slammed on **the brakes** as the car speeded downhill.



I have damaged your bicycle.

Sentences in active voice are also more concise than those in passive voice because fewer words are required to express action in active voice than in passive.

PASSIVE (MORE WORDY) ACTIVE (MORE CONCISE)

Action on the bill is being considered by the committee.	The committee is considering action on the bill.
By then, <b>the soundtrack</b> will have been	By then, <b>the sound engineers</b> will have
completely remixed by <b>the sound engineers</b> .	completely remixed <b>the soundtrack</b> .

#### **Changing Active to Passive**

If you want to change an active voice sentence to passive voice, consider carefully who or what is performing the action expressed in the verb, and then make that agent the object of a "by the../" phrase. Make what is acted upon the subject of the sentence, and change the verb to a form of be + past participle. Including an explicit "by the.." phrase is optional.

The presiding officer vetoed the committee's recommendation.	
	The presiding
The committee's recommendation was vetoed by the presiding officer.	Officer
	Oncer
The leaders are seeking a fair resolution to the crisis.	The leaders
A fair resolution to the crisis is being sought. (by the leaders)	
Scientists have discovered traces of ice on the surface of Mars.	The scientists
Traces of ice have been discovered on the surface of Mars. (by scientists)	

In each these example, the passive voice in useful for highlighting the action and whate is acted upon instead of the agent.