

ACTIVE VOICE & PASSIVE VOICE

A verb is said to be in the “Active Voice” when its form shows that the person or thing denoted by the “Subject” does something.

A verb is said to be in the “Passive Voice” when its form shows that something is done to the person or thing denoted by the “Subject”.

Rules

The ‘Passive voice’ of a verb is formed by using the “Past Participle” form of the verb after using suitable “Be” form verbs like “is written”, “was written”, “will be written” or “is being written”, “was being written”, “have been written”, “had been written”, “will have

been written”, or “are sent”, “were sent”, “will be sent”, “are being sent”, “were being sent”, “have been sent”, “had been sent” etc

The “Object” of the verb in the ‘Active Voice’ takes the place of the “Subject” in the ‘Passive Voice’ and the “Subject” of the ‘Active Voice’ occupies the position of the “Object” in the ‘Passive Voice’.

If the verb has two “Objects” in the ‘Active Voice’, the sentence can be changed in two ways by using any one of the “Objects” as the “Subject” in the ‘Passive Voice’.

The word “by” (preposition) is mostly used before

the “Object” in the ‘Passive Voice’. If the verb is followed by a preposition in the ‘Active Voice’ itself, the same is used before “by”.

Personal pronouns change their forms when they change their position from that of the “Subject” to that of the “Object”.

Subject : I — We — You — He — She — It — They
Object : me — us — you — him — her — it — them

The ‘Passive’ forms of the “Present /Past/ Future Perfect Continuous “ and “Future Continuous” are more avoided than used.

While transferring sentences from ‘Active’ to ‘Passive’ or vice versa, the “form” of the sentence and “the tense” never change.

Simple method

At first locate the main verb in the given sentence. Then ask “Who?” (Who performed the action?) You will get the “Subject”. Now read the “Subject and Verb” together and ask “What” or “Whom” to know what is or who is involved in the action and you will get the “Object”.

Now, take the “Subject” and place it at the end and bring the “Object” to the first place. Change the verb into “Past Participle”. Add suitable “be” form verb to indicate the tense and degree.

If there is no answer for the questions “what / whom” then the verb happens to be an ‘intransitive’ one. The ‘intransitives’ cannot be changed into the ‘Passive Voice’.

You need an “Object” to change the ‘Voice’.

Samarth goes to school. (No object)

Samarth tells a story. (Object) — Active Voice

A story is told by Samarth. — Passive Voice

Examples

ACTIVE VOICE-

I never saw you before.

You could give it to me.

You have to pay eleven-pence postage.

You’ll never see me again.

Who gave you those directions?

Share your views with others.

How else would you learn it?

Narendra answered all the questions correctly.

The teacher did not believe them.

Test cricket has taken a back seat.

PASSIVE VOICE

You were never seen before (by me).

It could be given to me by you. (Direct Object)

I could be given it by you. (Indirect Object)

Eleven-pence postage has to be paid by you.

I shall never be seen again (by you) .

By whom were those directions given to you? (Direct Object)

By whom were you given those directions? (Indirect Object)

Let your views be shared with others.

How else would it be learnt by you?

All the questions were answered correctly by Narendra.

They were not believed by the teacher.

A back seat has been taken by test cricket.

Exercise

Rewrite the following sentences so that the verbs will be in the active voice.

1. We are taught grammar by Ms Sarala.
2. He was praised by the teacher.
3. The injured were taken to the hospital by the fire men.
4. The town was destroyed by an earthquake.
5. The teacher was pleased with the boy’s work.
6. The building was damaged by the fire.

7. By whom were you taught French?
8. You will be given a ticket by the manager.
9. The streets were thronged with spectators.
10. We will be blamed by everyone.

Answers

1. Ms Sarala teaches us grammar.
2. The teacher praised him.
3. The firemen took the injured to the hospital.
4. An earthquake destroyed the town.
5. The boy’s work pleased the teacher.

6. The fire damaged the building.
7. Who taught you French?
8. The manager will give you a ticket.
9. Spectators thronged the streets.
10. Everyone will blame us.