

Passive Voice

1. The passive voice Vs the active Voice

Read the examples :

- Most countries in Latin America speak Spanish. (active voice)
- Spanish is spoken in most countries in Latin America. (passive voice)

2. The use of the passive voice:

- 1) Passive voice is used when the focus is on the action. It is not important or not known however who or when is performing the action.

Example: “a letter was written” the focus here is on the fact that a letter was written, we do not know who wrote it.

- 2) Sometimes a statement in the passive voice is more polite than in the active voice

Example: “a vase was broken” the focus here is on the fact that the vase was broken, we do not blame anyone.

3. The form of the passive voice:

Subject + the appropriate form of “to be” + past participle

When rewriting active sentences into passive note the following:

- 1) The object of the active sentence becomes the subject of the passive sentence.
- 2) The form of the verb is the appropriate form of “to be”
- 3) The subject of the active sentence becomes the object of the passive sentence.

Examples:

Simple present:

Active: Nancy makes tea

Passive: Tea is made by Nancy

Simple past:

Active: Nancy made tea

Passive: tea was made by Nancy

Present progressive:

Active: Nancy is making tea

Passive: Tea is being made by Nancy

Past progressive:

Active: Nancy was making tea

Passive: Tea was being made by Nancy

Present perfect

Active Nancy has made tea

Passive: Tea has been made by Nancy

Past perfect:

Active: Nancy had made tea

Passive: Tea had been made by Nancy

Simple future

Active: Nancy will make tea

Passive: Tea will be made by Nancy.

Exercises:

1) Identify the Voice

Go through the sentences given below and identify the voice used.

1. Shreya Ghoshal sings beautiful songs.
2. The Sun sets in the West.
3. The boy was being beaten by his teacher.
4. Bucky is helped by Steve.
5. The carpenter is building the desk.
6. The woodcutter cut down the tree.
7. The man dropped his axe into the river.
8. The bird was shot by the naughty boy.
9. The bag was found by me.
10. Natasha lost the money.
11. The farmer will plough the field.
12. The work will be finished by the workers in a day.
13. The enemy has entered the war zone.
14. Who sang the song?
15. The children teased the animals.

Answers

1. Active voice 2. Active voice 3. Passive voice 4. Passive Voice 5. Active voice 6. Active voice 7. Active voice 8. Passive voice 9. Passive voice 10. Active voice 11. Active voice 12. Passive voice 13. Active voice 14. Active voice 15. Active voice

Conversion of active voice into passive voice and vice-versa can help learners comprehend thoroughly and also check how far they have understood the usage of active and passive voice. Here is an active voice to passive voice conversion exercise for you.

2) Change the following sentences from active voice to passive voice.

1. The dog chased the cat.
2. The dog bit the boy.
3. The peon rang the bell.
4. Ram played hockey.
5. Miss Mary teaches us English.
6. Raj caught the ball.
7. Children like sweets.
8. Rita will take a photograph.
9. Who taught you this poem?
10. The police arrested the smuggler.
11. Shiva was flying a kite.
12. The hunter shot the deer.
13. The lion attacked the zebra.
14. Virat threw the ball.
15. Everyone loves Zara.
16. My sister has drawn this portrait.
17. The people were helping the wounded woman.
18. Sam had taken the medicines.
19. The player is taking extra time.
20. The cat ate the fish.

Answers

1. The cat was chased by the dog.
2. The boy was bitten by the dog.
3. The bell was rung by the peon.
4. Hockey was played by Ram.
5. English is taught to us by Miss Mary.
6. The ball was caught by Raj.
7. Sweets are liked by children.
8. A photograph will be taken by Rita.
9. By whom were you taught this poem?
10. The smuggler was arrested by the police.

11. A kite was being flown by Shiva.
12. The deer was shot by the hunter.
13. The zebra was attacked by the lion.
14. The ball was thrown by Virat.
15. Zara is loved by everyone.
16. This portrait has been drawn by my sister.
17. The wounded woman was being helped by the people.
18. The medicines had been taken by Sam.
19. Extra time is being taken by the player.
20. The fish was eaten by the cat.