

ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICE

A sentence can be expressed in the **active voice** or the **passive voice**.

If the subject of a sentence does something, the verb is in the **active voice**. If something is done to the subject, the verb is in the **passive voice**.

(i) The **passive voice** is used to show that the action is more important than the doer.

Examples:

Active : The maid **does** the housework.

Passive : The housework **is done** by the maid.



(ii) The **passive voice** is used when the doer of the action is not known or uncertain. The doer or 'agent' is left out of the sentence.

Examples:

Active : Someone **stole** Jean's wallet.

Passive : Jean's wallet **was stolen**.



(iii) The **passive voice** consists of a verb 'to be' and a **past participle**.

Examples:

I. **Active** : They **sweep** the park every morning.

Passive : The park **is swept** every morning.



Unit 45 Active And Passive Voice

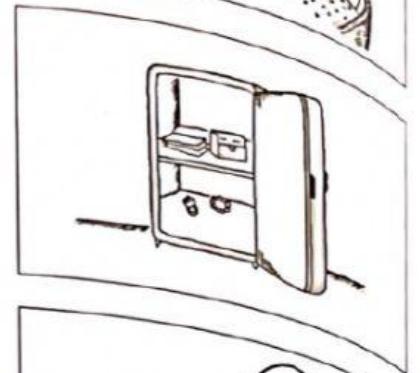
2. Active : May **is looking** after my younger brother.

Passive : My younger brother **is being looked** after by May.



3. Active : Someone **has opened** the safe.

Passive : The safe **has been opened**.



4. Active : The principal **praised** the pupil.

Passive : The pupil **was praised** by the principal.



5. Active : Jack **was bullying** Tom.

Passive : Tom **was being bullied** by Jack.



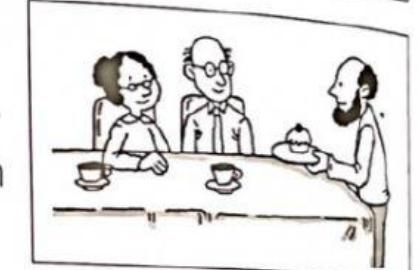
6. Active : They **had burgled** the house twice.

Passive : The house **had been burgled** twice.



7. Active : Mr Owen **will serve** the guests himself.

Passive : The guests **will be served** by Mr Owen himself.



8. Active : Mrs Mark **was preparing** the meal.

Passive : The meal **was being prepared** by Mrs Mark.



More examples:

1. (a) Mr Owen **supervises** the workers. (active)
(b) The workers **are supervised** by Mr Owen. (passive)
2. (a) A speeding car **knocked** down an old woman. (active)
(b) An old woman **was knocked** down by a speeding car. (passive)
3. (a) Someone **has vandalised** the school canteen. (active)
(b) The school canteen **has been vandalised**. (passive)
4. (a) They **are teaching** the parrot to sing. (active)
(b) The parrot **is being taught** to sing. (passive)
5. (a) The volunteers **will deliver** the food hampers to the poor families.
(active)
(b) The food hampers **will be delivered** to the poor families by the volunteers. (passive)
6. (a) The doctors **operated** on the patient immediately. (active)
(b) The patient **was operated** on immediately by the doctors. (passive)
7. (a) Some farmers **grow** rice. (active)
(b) Rice **is grown** by some farmers. (passive)
8. (a) The hunter **killed** a wild boar. (active)
(b) A wild boar **was killed** by the hunter. (passive)
9. (a) Mr Brown **will coach** the soccer team. (active)
(b) The soccer team **will be coached** by Mr Brown. (passive)
10. (a) The maid **is looking** after the children. (active)
(b) The children **are being looked** after by the maid. (passive)
11. (a) Billy **has painted** the house himself. (active)
(b) The house **has been painted** by Billy himself. (passive)
12. (a) He **had cheated** the company. (active)
(b) The company **had been cheated** by him. (passive)

(A) Rewrite the following sentences in the passive voice.

1. The hunter has captured a lion cub.

2. Mr Smith is giving away the prizes.

3. The factory employs many foreign workers.

4. Elsie will assist Mr Wilson in the project.

5. John won the first prize in the contest.

6. The shopkeeper had cheated a lot of customers.

7. Mrs Jones was bathing the baby.

8. Dr Dickson will treat the cancer patient immediately.

9. Rebecca made the dress herself.

10. Bees collect nectar from flowers.

(B) Rewrite the following sentences in the passive voice without using the 'agent'.

1. Someone robbed Mrs White in the lift.

2. They are painting the walls now.

3. They were renovating the house when it collapsed.

4. Someone saw a person entering the factory at midnight.

5. They are selling the fruits cheaply.

6. Someone has damaged Mr Cox's car.

7. They will turn off the lights at midnight.

8. Someone has stolen my bicycle.

9. People in this village do not speak English.

10. They have beaten us many times before.

11. She has misplaced the book.

12. They teach the children to be hardworking and polite.

(C) Rewrite the following sentences in the active voice.

1. The old woman was robbed by a teenager.

2. The pupils are being punished by the principal.

3. The crops have been harvested by the farmers.

4. The house will be rented out by the owner.

5. A letter was being written by Helen to her friend.

6. All the dishes were washed by Anna.

7. The book will be autographed by the writer.

8. Nectar is collected by bees.

9. Diseases are spread by mosquitoes.

10. The children are taught music by Mrs Smith.