

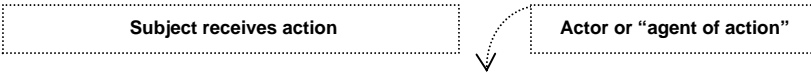
Active & Passive Voice

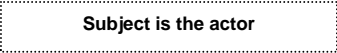
When you write a sentence in the **active voice**, the subject *performs* the action. In contrast, the subject of a sentence you have written in the **passive voice** *receives* action.

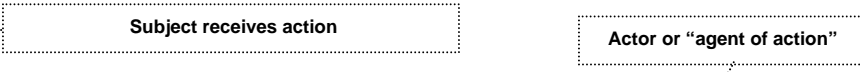
In most cases, the active voice is the preferred voice. This is not to say that passive voice is “wrong” or that there are not instances where the passive voice is the better choice. Generally speaking, active voice requires fewer words—and that alone helps prevent long sentences, confusion and/or awkwardness that can result from extra words.

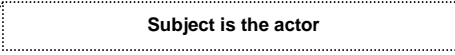
Active voice reduces your word count by eliminating the need for the various helping and “to be” forms verbs such as *is, are, was, were, has, had, are, am, being, been, and be*. Below are examples of sentences that show active and passive voice.

Examples of Active and Passive Voice

Passive voice 
The **computers** were tossed out the window by the technophobes.

Active voice 
The **technophobes** tossed the computers out the window.

Passive voice 
The angry **rioters** were dispersed with tear gas by cool-headed police.

Active voice 
Cool-headed **police** dispersed rioters with tear gas.

Passive voice. Occasionally, passive voice is preferred when the actor or thing causing action is less important, unknown, or common knowledge. Passive voice can also be used to control (i.e., manipulate) the importance of the subject within the sentence.

Example - Using passive voice to shift or diminish responsibility

The deserted island was destroyed by a slight tactical error.

Example – Using passive voice when the actor is less important

The golf course was completed after the duck pond was filled.

Example – Using passive voice when the actor is common knowledge

The city of Pompeii was blanketed with lava and ash.

Example – Using passive voice when the actor is unknown

Many campers were missing after midnight.