

Rules of Active & Passive Voice

Important Rules on Active Passive Voice

Active: They will do the work

Passive: The work will be done by them.

• When the person doing the action is the subject, we use an Active verb. But when the subject is what the action is pointed at, then we use a passive verb.

As in the above example, an **ACTIVE** sentence is the one where the person (**THEY**) is also the subject of the sentence.

While **PASSIVE** sentence is the one, where the subject is the action showing word (**WORK**).

NOTE: However, the sentences only with transitive verb (verb with object) can be changed into a **PASSIVE VOICE**.

For Example,

Active: The man is running.

Passive: Not Possible as the object after the verb (**Running**) is missing.

To Recognize the Active & Passive Sentence easily ask these question.

- What is the action/verb in this sentence?
- What/who is the subject of this sentence?
- Is the subject of the sentence **PERFORMING** the action/verb?

If the answer to the last question is **YES**, then the sentence is in the **ACTIVE** voice. If the answer to the last question is **NO**, then the sentence is in the **PASSIVE** voice.

General Form:

Active: SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT

Passive: OBJECT (OF ACTIVE VOICE) + HELPING VERB (FORM OF VERB "BE") + PAST PARTICIPLE OF TRANSITIVE VERB + BY + SUBJECT (if required).

NOTE: Sometimes while converting sentence from Passive Voice to Active voice, the subject is missing.

For Example,

Passive: The room was cleaned.

Active: Someone cleaned the room.

"BY SOMEONE" is missing from the Passive Sentence.

Conversion of Active to Passive Sentence in different Tenses

1. Present Simple Tense

Passive Voice: Object + is/am/are + Verb (3rd form) + by + Subject

Active voice: He sings a song.

- He does not sing a song.
- Does he sing a song?

Passive voice: A song **is** sung by him.

- A song **is** not sung by him.
- **Is** a song sung by him?

2. Past Simple Tense

Passive voice: Object + was/were + Verb (3rd form) + by + Subject

Active voice: I killed a snake

- I did not kill a snake.
- Did I kill a snake?

Passive voice:

- A snake **was** killed by me.
- A snake **was** not killed by me.
- **Was** a snake killed by me?

3. Future Simple Tense

Passive Voice: Object + will/shall + be + Verb (3rd form) + by + Subject

Active voice:

- She will buy a car.
- She will not buy a car.

- Will she buy a car?

Passive voice:

- A car **will be** bought by her.
- A car **will not be** bought by her.
- **Will** a car **be** bought by her?

4. Present Continuous Tense

Passive Voice: Object + is/am/are + being + Verb (3rd form) + by + Subject

Active voice:

- I am writing a letter
- I am not writing a letter.
- Am I writing a letter?

Passive voice:

- A letter **is being** written by me.
- A letter **is not being** written by me.
- **Is** a letter **being** written by me?

5. Past Continuous Tense

Passive Voice: Object + was/were + being + Verb (3rd form) + by + Subject

Active voice:

- He was driving a car.
- He was not driving a car.
- Was he driving a car?

Passive voice:

- A car **was being** driven by him.
- A car **was not being** driven by him.
- **Was** a car **being** driven by him?

6. Present Perfect Tense

Passive voice: Object + has/have + been + Verb (3rd form) + by + Subject

Active voice:

- She has finished her work
- She has not finished her work.
- Has she finished her work?

Passive voice:

- Her work **has been** finished by her.
- Her work **has not been** finished by her.
- **Has** her work **been** finished by her?

7. Past Perfect Tense

Passive Voice: Object + had + been + Verb (3rd form) + by + Subject

Active voice:

- They had completed the assignment.
- They had not completed the assignment.
- Had they completed the assignment?

Passive voice:

- The assignment **had been** completed by them.
- The assignment **had not been** completed by them.
- **Had** the assignment **been** completed by them?

8. Future Perfect Tense

Passive Voice: Object + shall/will + have + been + Verb (3rd form) + by + Subject

Active voice:

- You will have started the job.
- You will have not started the job.
- Will you have started the job?

Passive voice:

- The job **will have been** started by you.
- The job **will not have been** started by you.
- **Will** the job **have been** started by you?

Important Points to Remember

- Future continuous & perfect continuous tenses do not form passive voice.
- Some verb cannot be passive like be, belong, exist, lack, resemble, seem, suit, have (= own).

For example:

- Tom has a guitar.
- The building seemed empty.
- The certain verb takes fixed preposition after them that replaces the "by". Such verb is – known to, surprised at/by, amazed at, astonished at, vexed at, annoyed with/at, contained in, decorated with, filled with, tired of, engulfed in. etc.

For example:

Active: The fire engulfed the building.

Passive: The building was engulfed in the fire.

- Some verb has two objects like giving, send offer award etc. The sentence having these words have two possible passive forms.

For example:

Active: He gave me a book.

Passive 1: I was given a book by him.

Passive 2: A book was given to me by him.

Questions:-

1. Change the following sentence into Passive voice:

Question :- He kept me waiting.

I had been waited by him

I waited by him.

I was kept waiting by him.

I was waited by him.

Solution

The appropriate passive voice for the given statement is: "I was kept waiting by him". While changing voice, the verb is changed into its past participle.

2. Identify the sentence in passive voice:

It was known to them.

She has done her work.

Mohan will learn the lesson.

He has given me his book.