

In the **Passive Voice**, the agents doing the action become objects in the sentence.

Passive verbs include any form of "to be" — *am, is, are, were, was, be, been, being*.

In the **Active Voice**, the agent or subject acts. Active verbs are clear, strong, and direct.

Writers should use the active voice instead of the passive voice unless there is a good reason for choosing the passive voice. Two good reasons for using the passive voice are:

- when the writer does not want to emphasize a subject.
- When the subject is not known.



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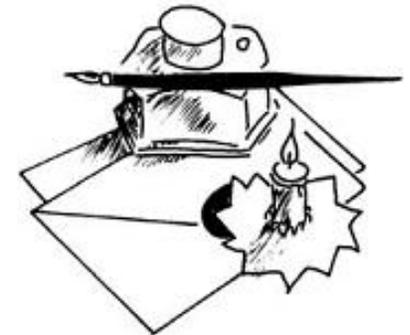
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## Passive Voice



## Mini-Lesson #28

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*The verb "to be" (be, am, are, is, was, were, has been, have been) can precede a passive verb.*

Passive: The party decorations **were not taken down** until yesterday.

Active: We did not **take down** the party decorations until yesterday.

*Many times the word "by" follows passive verbs, or it is implied*

Passive: The active voice should **be used by** writers.

Active: Writers should **use** the active voice.

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*How to change a verb from passive to active:*

1. Identify the parts of the passive verb. Do you have any forms of the verb "to be" present before the verb? Is the word "by" present?

**A dance was choreographed by Mr. Martins.**



**This verb is in the passive voice.**

2. Next, identify the actor (who or what is doing the action) of the sentence. This usually follows the word "by," and it is the agent that performs something.

**A dance was choreographed by Mr. Martins.**



**This is the actor.**

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3. Now make the actor into the subject and change the sentence so that it makes sense.

**Mr. Martins choreographed the dance**



**This is the subject now.**

*You can enable **Microsoft Word** to check for verbs: From **TOOLS**, choose **OPTIONS**; next choose the **SPELLING AND GRAMMAR** tab. Check the last box, **SHOW READABILITY STATS**.*

*Be sure to carefully monitor any changes Microsoft Word suggests. They may not always be the best choice for your purpose. For example, the sentence "She is a doctor" would be identified as being in the passive voice; however, there is no better, more concise way to state that information.*