

VERB VOICE

When the subject of a sentence performs the action denoted by the sentence's verb, we say that sentence has an **Active Voice**.

For some, it may be easier to think of active voice like this: sentences with action verbs have an actor, an action, and a thing that is acted upon. When the actor comes before the action in a sentence, that sentence is written in active voice.

The following examples are written in active voice. Notice how the actor (subject) comes before the action (verb).

- a. Patrick must have eaten fifty chicken wings.

Patrick (actor) is doing the eating (action) of the chicken wings (acted upon).

- b. Nicklaus mailed the package.

Nicklaus (actor) is doing the mailing (action) of the package (acted upon).

When the subject of a sentence is being acted upon by the sentence's verb, we say that sentence has a **Passive Voice**.

For some it may be easier to think of passive voice like this: sentences with action verbs have an actor, an action, and a thing that is acted upon. When the acted upon comes before the action in a sentence, that sentence is written in passive voice.

- a. Fifty chicken wings must have been eaten by Patrick.

Chicken wings (acted upon) are being eaten (action) by Patrick (actor).

- b. The package is mailed by Nicklaus.

The package (acted upon) is being mailed (action) by Nicklaus (actor).

Changing a Sentence from Passive to Active

If a passive sentence is written:	Acted upon	→	Action	→	Actor
And an active sentence is written:	Actor	→	Action	→	Acted Upon

Changing a passive sentence to an active sentence just means shuffling the order of the sentence a little..

Passive:	The campers (acted upon)	→	were eaten (action)	→	by a Sasquatch.
Active:	A sasquatch (action)	→	ate (action)	→	the campers.

In most cases active voice is the preferred structure of a sentence. It is important to note, however, that the passive voice may be a better choice in sentences where the doer of the action is unknown, unwanted, or unneeded in the sentence

Examples: The votes have been counted.
 (The actor counting the votes is not important to this sentence)

 Sometimes Jim's efforts are not fully appreciated.
 (The actor not fully appreciating Jim's efforts is not specific, and therefore unnecessary)

Also, if the writer wishes to emphasize the action of the sentence rather than the doer of the action, passive voice is a good choice.

Examples: The chicken wing eating record was finally broken last Saturday.
 (It can be assumed that the record being broken is more important to the writer's purpose than the person who broke the record)

 The guilty looking teen was questioned for sixteen hours by Mo and the police.
 (In this case the writer wants to emphasize the *teen* rather than *Mo and the police*)

The writer may, also wish to use passive voice for sentence variety. For the sake of class, however, please write in active and direct sentences whenever possible.

NAME: _____

Please complete this worksheet to the best of your ability.

A. REVIEW: Run-Ons: Identify the following as fused (F), comma spliced (CS), or correct (C) sentences. For fused and comma spliced sentences, please mark the point where the error occurs.

For example: a. F I enjoy reading my brother hates it, though.

1. ____ Thomas finished the marathon then he bought a pack of cigarettes and swore he'd never run again.
2. ____ When his wife found the cigarettes, she threw them in the trash, but she didn't tell Thomas about throwing them out.
3. ____ Thomas searched high and low for the cigarettes, nevertheless, he couldn't find the pack anywhere.
4. ____ He started to think his house was haunted, could a ghost have stolen his cigarettes?
5. ____ When the wind blew his bedroom door closed, Thomas thought it was a ghost, and he ran out of his house screaming at the top of his lungs.

B. REVIEW: Sentence Combination: Using embedding, subordination, and coordination, combine all of the ideas in the following simple sentences to create one full, complicated sentence.

She was young.

She was a tomboy.

She loved toads.

She had skinned knees.

She was our neighbor.

My brother had a crush on her.

He hated toads.

He caught a toad.

He gave her a toad as a gift.

C. VERB VOICE: Identify the following sentences as (Passive) or (Active). If the sentence is written in the passive voice, please rewrite in the active voice.

6. Alice was invited to play croquet by the Queen of Hearts.
7. The Daltons and the Clantons were never captured by the posse.
8. Mario had been training for the marathon for six months.
9. Janet was not allowed to watch the movie because her homework was not yet completed.
10. Airline passengers are routinely checked by security guards to make sure no weapons are being carried on board.
11. Many scenes of American life in the 1950s were painted by Norman Rockwell.
12. Fireworks are considered dangerous by many people and have been outlawed by many cities.
13. The strong wind bent the newly planted birch tree to the ground.
14. Frank was harassed by a pack of angry teenagers.

D. VERB VOICE: Create three active sentences and three passive sentences.

Passive:

15.

16.

17.

Active:

18.

19.

20.