Active and Passive Voice



Warm-up

Rani : Where are kangaroos found?

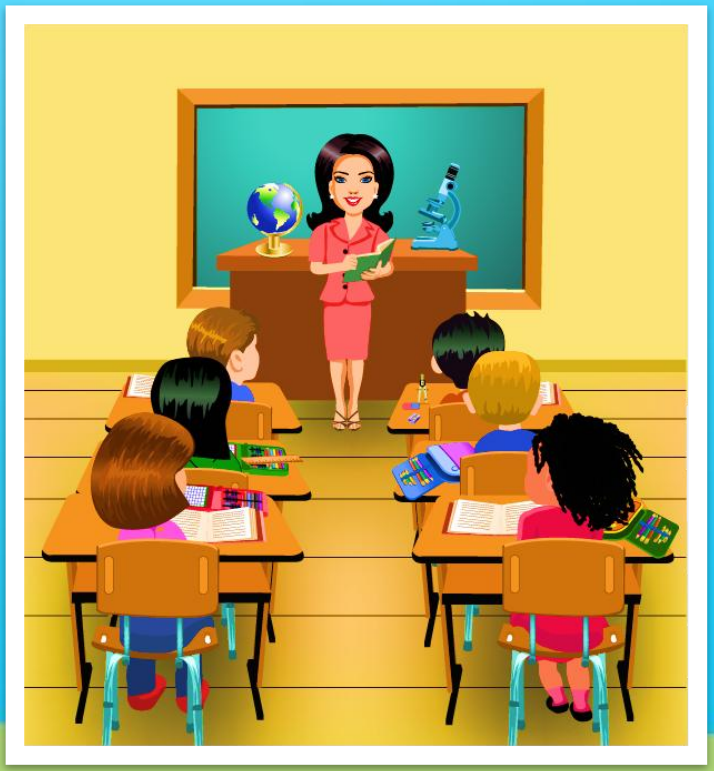
Soham: You can find kangaroos mostly in Australia.

Soham can also answer the same question differently.

Soham: Kangaroos are mostly found in Australia.

Soham's first answer is in the active voice.

Soham's second answer is in the passive voice.



Examples: Active and Passive Voice



ACTIVE VOICE	PASSIVE VOICE
The cat chased the mouse.	The mouse was chased by the cat.
Hanif changed the light bulb.	The light bulb was changed by Hanif.
Suniti trimmed the shrubs.	The shrubs were trimmed by Suniti.
I will clean the house on Sunday.	The house will be cleaned by me on Sunday.
Who took your pen?	By whom was your pen taken?

Remember

In the **active voice**, the **subject** of the sentence performs the action expressed in the verb.

The **cat** chased the **mouse**.

In the **passive voice**, the **subject** is acted upon; he or she receives the action expressed by the verb.

The **mouse** was chased by the **cat**.



Remember

Active voice is the most common voice used in English.

- It creates short, clear and direct sentences.
- It highlights the subject as **the doer** of the action.

Passive voice is used more commonly in formal and scientific writing.

- Passive voice is used when the agent performing the action is unimportant or unknown or when the writer does not wish to name the agent.
- It highlights the action and what is acted upon.



More Examples

- **Harsh broke the vase. (Active voice)**
  - It is clear that Harsh did it.
  - The focus is on Harsh breaking the vase.

- **The vase was broken. (Passive voice)**
  - It is not clear who broke it or the speaker does not wish to reveal that Harsh did it.
  - The focus is on the vase being broken and not who broke it.

- **School will be closed on Tuesday.**
  - The focus is on the fact that school will be closed, rather than on who (the management) decided on it.



Test Yourself

Say if the following sentences are in the active voice or the passive voice.

1. The child threw the ball.
2. The show was attended by many important people.
3. This machine was built by my brother.
4. The bang from the car scared away the crows.
5. Ms Smith’s cat was lost.
6. Latha opened the presents.
7. Did you post the letter?
8. I solved the puzzle.



Changing active voice to passive voice

Example: The mechanic repaired the car.

1. Change the object to the subject position.

The car……

2. Change the verb to the passive form,

while maintaining the same tense.

The car was repaired……

3. Move the subject after the verb.

The car was repaired by the mechanic.



Changing passive voice to active voice

Example: The newspaper is being read by Lara.

1. Make the doer of the action the subject.

   Lara is ……

2. Change the verb to the active, making sure to keep the same tense.

   Lara is reading….

3. Put the subject of the passive sentence after the verb.

   Lara is reading the newspaper.

Note: If the doer is not apparent, you can use a suitable noun or pronoun depending on the context.

Examples:

Action will be taken quickly. ⟹ We will take action quickly.

The thief will be caught. ⟹ The police will catch the thief.

More examples

Tense	Active voice	Passive voice
Simple present	Soni writes her novel in the evenings.	The novel is written by Soni in the evenings.
Present continuous	Soni is writing a novel.	A novel is being written by Soni.
Simple past	Soni wrote a journal.	A journal was written by Soni.
Past continuous	Soni was writing a mystery story.	A mystery story was being written by Soni.
Present perfect	Soni has written many books.	Many books have been written by Soni.
Past perfect	Soni had written to the publisher last month.	The publisher had been written to by Soni.
Simple future	Soni will write to a new publisher.	A new publisher will be written to by Soni.
Future continuous	Soni will be writing a blog.	A blog will be written by Soni.

Test Yourself

Change the following sentences to the passive voice.

1. The gardener has planted some new flowering plants.
2. They speak Mandarin in China.
3. Mr Corin will be directing the play.
4. The dog chased the rabbit.
5. We were fixing the windows.

