

Graphic Grammar: The Passive Voice

Fullerton College Writing Center

Name: _____

Watch the video. Then complete these exercises and check your answers.

Part 1: Active or Passive?

In an active sentence, the _____ of the sentence is doing the action of the verb.

In a _____ sentence, someone else is doing the action of the verb to the _____.

A. Circle the subject in each sentence below. Then draw an arrow showing the direction of the action. Is the sentence active or passive?

EXAMPLES: The students turned in their essays late. (Active) Passive
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 The essays haven't been graded yet. Active (Passive)
 BE pp

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| 1. Jack was feeding his dog. | Active Passive |
| 2. Betty was given a birthday surprise. | Active Passive |
| 3. Junk food should not be eaten by anyone. | Active Passive |
| 4. Bill should not lie on the couch all day. | Active Passive |
| 5. Baby Bob just drank two bottles of milk. | Active Passive |
| 6. Baby Bob must be burped right away! | Active Passive |
| 7. Engineers are trying to fix the bridge. | Active Passive |
| 8. The bridge was damaged by the earthquake. | Active Passive |

B. To check your answers above, underline the verbs. If there is a form of BE and a past participle, then it is a passive sentence. Write "BE" and "pp" under the verb.

Part 2: Forms of BE

Complete the chart below.

Simple present	This car _____ stolen.
Present continuous	This car _____ stolen.
Present perfect	This car _____ stolen.
Modal (might)	This car _____ stolen.
Modal (could)	This car _____ stolen.
Future (will)	This car _____ stolen.

Simple past	This car _____ stolen.
Past continuous	This car _____ stolen.
Past perfect	This car _____ stolen.
Past (might)	This car _____ stolen.
Past (could)	This car _____ stolen.
Future (going to)	This car _____ stolen.

Part 3: Changing a Sentence from Active to Passive

We often use passive sentences when the subject is unknown, obvious, or unimportant. We also use passive to sound more polite or formal or to avoid blaming someone.

To change a sentence from active to passive, first find the object. The object becomes the subject. It could be the direct or indirect object, but if there is NO object, then the sentence **cannot** be changed to passive.

A. Circle the object in the sentences below. Then rewrite the sentence in passive form if possible.

EXAMPLE: People in Canada speak English and French.

English and French are spoken ~~by people~~ in Canada.

1. Somebody knocked over the trash can again.
2. A blind person took these photos.
3. A translator translated this book from Russian to English in 1895.
4. Nobody has cleaned the bathroom for a week.
5. An accident happened on the freeway last night.
6. Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone.
7. We do not allow smoking on this campus.
8. They will collect the trash one day late this week.

B. In the sentences that you wrote above, cross out the "by" phrases that are unknown, obvious, or not important.