

English 10 • Grammar Review • Active vs. Passive Voice: Refresher/Practice

A Quick Refresher on the Concept

CONTRARY TO popular belief, simply connecting nouns and verbs does not make good writing. As a developing writer, attention must be paid to “voice” in writing. In the **ACTIVE VOICE**, the subject performs the action that the verb expresses. Typically, using the active voice gives your writing a more forceful feel. Conversely, in the **PASSIVE VOICE**, the subject receives the action. Also, a form of the verb “to be” (i.e. *am, is, are, was, were, or been*) is added to the verb. It is important to note that not *all* uses of the verb “to be” are in the passive voice. In general, **ACTIVE VOICE** is preferred to **PASSIVE VOICE**. Consider the following examples:

Ⓐ **PASSIVE:** The city was hit by a booming thunderstorm. (“was hit” becomes *hit*)
ACTIVE: *A booming thunderstorm hit the city.*

Ⓑ **PASSIVE:** The jungle undergrowth has been hacked through by the explorers. (“has been hacked” becomes *hacked*)
ACTIVE: *The explorers hacked through the jungle undergrowth.*

Practice Identifying

CLASSIFY the following sentences as either **ACTIVE** or **PASSIVE**, by writing *A* or *P* in the blank then wait to go over the correct answers. Be sure to hold on to this sheet for future reference.

1. _____ The police broke up the party.
2. _____ Drugs are sold every day on the street.
3. _____ Stockings were hung by the little children before bed.
4. _____ In Newport, reports were being made about a possible storm.
5. _____ Try as he might, Jim could not walk a straight line.
6. _____ The bait was eaten by the crocodiles
7. _____ Pirates ruined our day at the beach.
8. _____ Midgets will be tossed across the field at 7 P.M.
9. _____ Joanie ran the marathon in three hours.
10. _____ Jimmy was reading when Jenny woke up.