

# ACTIVE VERSUS PASSIVE VOICE

You must be able to recognize and correct active and passive voice in your writing and correct this error to make your writing flow better.

## WHAT IS ACTIVE VOICE?

- In **active voice**, the *doer* of the action is the grammatical *subject* of the sentence.
- Generally, active voice is preferred because it creates a stronger, more immediate sentence.

## WHAT IS PASSIVE VOICE?

- In **passive voice**, the action *is done to* the grammatical *subject*; in other words, the receiver of the action is the subject.
- *Sometimes*, passive voice is appropriate because it is not important who performed the action.

## HOW TO CORRECT ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICE

- To switch from passive voice to active voice, first determine “who” or “what” performed the action; then, make that the subject of your sentence.
- To switch from active voice to passive voice, take the receiver of the action and make it the subject.
- When you discover an unnecessary shift in voice, the best choice is usually to change all uses of voice to active.

## EXAMPLES OF ACTIVE VERSUS PASSIVE VOICE

ACTIVE	PASSIVE
Once a week, Tom <b>cleans</b> the house.	Once a week, the house <b>is cleaned</b> by Tom.
Sam <b>repaired</b> the car.	The car <b>was repaired</b> by Sam.
George <b>had repaired</b> many cars before he received his mechanic's license.	Many cars <b>had been repaired</b> by George before he received his mechanic's license.
Chef Jones <b>had been preparing</b> the restaurant's fantastic dinners for two years before he moved to Paris.	The restaurant's fantastic dinners <b>had been being prepared</b> by Chef Jones for two years before he moved to Paris.
Someone <b>will finish</b> the work by 5:00 PM.	The work <b>will be finished</b> by someone by 5:00 PM.
They <b>will have completed</b> the project before the deadline.	The project <b>will have been completed</b> before the deadline.
They <b>are going to have completed</b> the project before the deadline.	The project <b>is going to have been completed</b> before the deadline.
Jerry <b>used to pay</b> the bills.	The bills <b>used to be paid</b> by Jerry.
My mother <b>would always make</b> the pies.	The pies <b>would always be made</b> by my mother.
I knew John <b>would finish</b> the work by 5:00 PM.	I knew the work <b>would be finished</b> by John by 5:00 PM.
I thought Sally <b>was going to make</b> a beautiful dinner tonight.	I thought a beautiful dinner <b>was going to be made</b> by Sally tonight.