Active & Passive Voice

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In English grammar, verbs have five properties, namely:

1. **Mood**; indicative, subjunctive, imperative, interrogative
2. **Tense**; Present, Future, Past
3. **Person**; first, second, third
4. **Number**; Singular and Plural
5. **Voice**; active and passive

Let us first understand the meaning of voice, and what is active voice and passive voice.

What is Voice of a verb?

The voice of a verb expresses whether the subject in the sentence has performed or received the action.

Example:

- The watchman opens the door. (active)
- The door is opened by the watchman.

Types of Voices of Verb

Verbs have two voices:

(i) Active Voice

(ii) Passive Voice

1. The Active Voice

When the subject of a sentence performs the verb's action, we say that the sentence is in the active voice. Sentences in the active voice have a strong, direct, and clear tone. Here are some short and straightforward examples of active voice.

Active voice examples

- *Hens lay eggs.*
- *Birds build nests.*
- *A monkey is eating a banana.*
- *A big boy lifted a small boy.*
- *A baboon chased a dog.*

The three sentences above have a basic sentence structure:

Subject + verb + object

A monkey (*subject*) is eating (*verb*) a banana (*object*)

A big boy (*subject*) lifted (*verb*) a small boy (*object*).

A baboon (*subject*) chased (*verb*) a dog (*object*).

These sentences are in the active voice.

2. The Passive Voice

When the action expressed by the verb is received by the subject, it is passive voice. Passive voice is used when the doer of the action is not known or when the focus of the sentence is on the action and not the subject.

The subject is with a structure:

Object + verb + subject

A banana (*object*) is eaten (*verb*) by a monkey (*subject*)

A small boy (*object*) was lifted (*verb*) by a big boy (*subject*)

A dog (*object*) was chased (*verb*) by a baboon (*subject*)

Passive Voice Examples:

- Eggs are laid by hens.
- Nests are built by birds.
- Bananas are eaten by monkeys.
- The money was counted by the cashier.
- The squirrel was chased by the dog.

Active and Passive Voice Rules For Conversion of Sentence

Below are the active-passive voice rules to follow for changing an active sentence into a passive voice.

Before heading to the rules of active-passive voice, let's check the examples of active and passive voice sentences.

Conversion of Active and Passive voice examples

- Rita wrote a letter. *(Subject + Verb + Object)*

= A letter was written by Rita. *(Object) + (auxiliary verb) + (past participle) + (preposition) + (subject).*

- She cooks food. *(Subject + Verb + Object)*

= The food is cooked by her. *(Object) + (auxiliary verb) + (past participle) + (preposition) + (subject).*

Rules for Active – Passive Voice Conversions

Rule 1:

Identify the (S+V+O) Subject, Verb and object in the active sentence to convert to passive voice

Example:

He drives car. (Subject – *He*, verb – *Drives*, object – *Car*)

Rule 2:

Interchange the object and subject with each other, i.e. object of the active sentence takes the place of the subject of the passive sentence.

Example:

Active voice: She knits sweaters. (Subject – She, Verb – Knits, Object – Sweaters)

Passive Voice: The sweaters are knitted by her. (Object *sweater* is interchanged with the subject *She*).

Rule 3:

In passive voice sometimes the subject is not used, i.e. the subject in passive voice can be omitted if the sentence without it gives enough meaning.

Example:

Milk is sold in litres

Cars are parked everywhere

Rule 4:

Change the base verb in the active sentence into the past participle.

Drink -drunk

Clap – clapped

Swim – swum

Eat – eaten

Example:

The dinner is prepared

He is known

The jar is filled

Rule 5:

The subject is preceded by the preposition i.e. ***by, to, with***, etc.

Example:

- Active voice: She prepares dinner.
- Passive voice: *The dinner is prepared **by** her*.
- Active voice: She knows him.
- Passive voice: *He is known **to** her*.
- Active voice: Juice fills the jar.
- Passive voice: *The jar is filled **with** juice*.

Rule 6:

While converting Active voice sentence to Passive voice sentence, the pronoun used in the sentence also changes in the following manner:

Active Voice Pronoun	Passive Voice Pronoun
I	Me
We	Us
He	Him

She	Her
They	Them
You	You
It	It

Rule 7:

Use the suitable helping or auxiliary verb (***is/am/are/was,*** etc.). The rules for using auxiliary verbs in passive voice sentences are different for each tense.

Example:

- The letter **is** written by her
- A book **was** not bought by her
- Chocolates **are being** eaten by them.

Let's examine how tenses change when we convert from active to passive voice

- **Simple Present Tense**

Active Sentences	Passive Sentences
He writes an essay	An essay is written by him

Sheena does the housework	The housework is done by Sheena
She cares for the rabbit	The rabbit is cared for by her
Jacob always plays the guitar	The guitar is always played by Jacob

- **Present Continuous Tense**

Active Sentences	Passive Sentences
They are eating bananas	The bananas are being eaten by them
Bob is drawing a diagram	A diagram is being drawn by Bob
Samta is playing the piano	A piano is being played by Samta
She is waiting for Reema	Reema is being waited for by her

- **Present Perfect Tense**

Active Sentences	Passive Sentences

He has done the work	The work has been done.
They have left the apartment.	The apartment has been left by them.
He has created this masterpiece	This masterpiece has been created by him
He has read the newspaper	The newspaper has been read by him

Note- *[except certain exemptions, no passive Voice formation for the following tenses can be formed, Present Perfect Continuous Tense, Past Perfect Continuous Tense, Future Perfect Continuous Tense and Future Continuous Tense]*

- **Simple Past Tense**

Active Voice	Passive Voice
Ria paid the bills	The bills were paid by Ria
The teacher called the student	The student was called by the teacher
She did not buy the fruits	The fruits were not bought by her

- **Past Progressive/Continuous Tense**

Active Voice	Passive Voice
They were waiting for him	He was being waited for by them
Astha was learning French	French was being learnt by Astha
She was playing kabaddi	Kabaddi was being played by her

- **Past Perfect Tense**

Active Voice	Passive Voice
She had won the match	The match had been won by her
I had finished her work	Her work had been finished by me
He had missed the last metro	The last metro had been missed by him

- **Simple Future Tense**

Active Voice	Passive Voice

He will write a letter	A letter will be written by him
He will repair her cycle	Her cycle will be repaired by him
He shall start the meeting	The meeting will be started by him

- **Future Perfect Tense**

Active Voice	Passive Voice
Meena will not have changed the bedsheet	The bed sheet will not have been changed by Meena
They will have won the match	The match will have been won by them
Reena will have washed the skirt	The skirt will have been washed by Reena

Exercise

Tell which of the options is the correct passive form of the sentence given in the active voice

Q.1. Never disobey your elders

1. You are asked not to disobey your elders.
2. Do not disobey your elders.
3. You are not to disobey your elders.

Q.2. The students listened to the teacher.

1. The teacher was being listened to by the students.
2. The teacher listened to students.
3. The teacher was listening to by the students
4. The teacher was listened to by the students.

Q.3. I have to do it.

1. It is to be done by me.
2. It should be done by me.
3. It has to be done by me.
4. It should have to be done by me.

Q.4. Tell the maid to prepare tea.

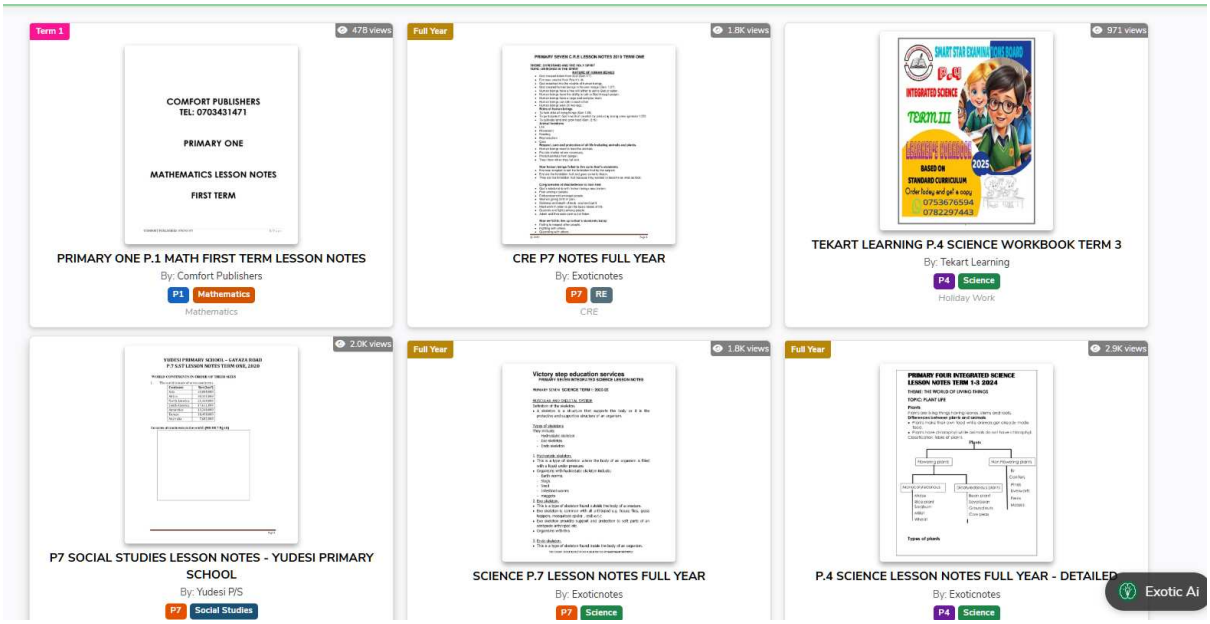
1. The tea will be prepared by the maid.
2. The maid will be told to prepare tea.
3. You are asked to tell the maid to prepare tea.

Q.5. Who stole your bike?

1. Your bike was stolen by whom?
2. By whom was your bike stolen?
3. Your bike was stolen by who?

End

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