

Using the Passive Voice

- * Definitions
- * Changing to the passive voice
- * Practice examples



Active voice vs. passive voice

Active voice takes the form “A did B”

Gutenberg printed the first book in 1458.

Passive voice takes the form “B was done (by A)”

The first book was printed (by Gutenberg) in 1458.

Active voice subjects perform an act

Active voice

Gutenberg printed the first book in 1458.

Subject

Verb

Object

Passive voice subjects are acted on

Active voice

Gutenberg printed the first book in 1458.

Subject

Verb

Object

Passive voice

The first book was printed by Gutenberg in 1458.

Subject

Verb

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	Simple	Continuous	Perfect
Present	I am + V ₃ /V _{ed}	I am being + V ₃ /V _{ed}	I have been + V ₃ /V _{ed}
Past	I was + V ₃ /V _{ed}	I was being + V ₃ /V _{ed}	I had been + V ₃ /V _{ed}
Future	I will be + V ₃ /V _{ed}	—	I will have been + V ₃ /V _{ed}
Future in The Past	I would be + V ₃ /V _{ed}	—	I would have been + V ₃ /V _{ed}

Omit the “agent” of the action

Active

Workers installed burglar alarms.

Passive, with agent

Burglar alarms were installed by the workers.

Passive, with the agent omitted

Burglar alarms were installed.

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Remember tense and number

<i>Active Voice</i>	<i>Passive voice</i>
I usually finish a project in eight hours.	
I will finish three projects in eight hours	
I finished a project in eight hours.	
I finished three projects in eight hours.	

Remember tense and number

<i>Active Voice</i>	<i>Passive voice</i>
I usually finish a project in eight hours.	A project is usually finished in eight hours.
I will finish three projects in eight hours	
I finished a project in eight hours.	
I finished three projects in eight hours.	

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I will finish three projects in eight hours	Three projects will be finished in eight hours
I finished a project in eight hours.	
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