

Avoiding Passive Voice Verbs

VOCABULARY

Active Voice

Verbs in the active voice indicate that the subject is performing the action.

Passive Voice

Verbs in the passive voice indicate that the subject is having something done to it. The subject is inactive.

THE RULE

1. Avoid writing wordy sentences by using active verbs.
 2. Many times, you can spot a passive voice verb by finding a “to be” verb (is, was, are, were) followed by present or past participle verb (ending in -ing or -ed).
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PRACTICE *Let's practice using Active Voice*

Error: The book **is being read** by Crystal.
(Sounds wordy; note the “is being” part of the verb).

Correction: Crystal **reads** the book.
(Nice and concise!).

Error: The play **was rated** by *The Dayton Daily News* to be one of the top plays of last year's season.

Correction: *The Dayton Daily News* **rated** the play to be one of the best.

Error: The class **was taught** by an expert in foreign affairs, so presentations **done** by students were graded accurately. *(Very wordy; note how “was” accompanies the past tense of the first verb; note how “done” is still passive voice, despite the lack of a helping verb).*

Correction: An expert in foreign affairs **taught** the course and graded students' presentations accurately.