

Active Vs. Passive

In most English sentences with an active verb, the subject is doing the action. This is called Active Voice.

The man ate two cheeseburgers. Bob mailed the letter. She has torn the paper.

In some sentences, the subject is being acted upon rather than doing the action. We call this Passive Voice.

Two cheeseburgers were eaten by the man. The letter was mailed by Bob. The paper was torn. (you can say by her).

Most people prefer Active Voice because it is more direct. However, Passive Voice can be a better choice if the doer of the action is unknown. EX: The ballots have been counted. A suspect was questioned by the police.

OR if the emphasis is on the action not the person doing the action. EX: The high jump record was broken on Saturday.

	active	passive
present	We make butter from milk. Jo cleans these rooms.	Butter is made from milk. These rooms are cleaned by Jo.
past	That man stole my car. They don't invite me to their parties.	My car was stolen by that man. I am never invited to their parties.
present continuous	The city is building a new airport. They are tearing down houses near the river.	A new airport is being built by the city. The houses near the river are being torn down.
past continuous	When I was here in 2008, they were building a new airport.	When I was here in 2008, a new airport was being built.
present perfect	They have painted the door. Someone has washed my socks.	The door has been painted. My socks have been washed.

Mark these sentences as active or passive and change them to the other type.

EX: Firefighters rescued many people. **Active Change to: Many people were rescued by firefighters.**

1. The janitor found the key.
2. Michelangelo painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.
3. Trucks are usually driven by men.
4. The Queen opens the bridge tomorrow.
5. An old Japanese man teaches calligraphy at the art museum.
6. This dictionary is used by most elementary schools.
7. The naughty children broke the window.
8. A new hat was bought by Sam.

9. Sara's doll was ruined by Joe.
10. Mother prepared our lunch.

Pronunciation: In some words O sounds like AW. Practice pronouncing these words.

dog	fog	log	hog	frog	honk	strong
long	song	gong	wrong	broth	moth	cloth
boss	moss	toss	gloss	cost	frost	loft

Choose the correct homonym (sounds alike, but not spelled alike, and different meaning).

1. Jerry read (threw, through) the newspaper.
2. Was that a (foul, fowl) ball?
3. Those people (new, knew) my parents.
4. (Our, Hour) family is taking a trip.
5. We stopped when he (blue, blew) the whistle.
6. Can you hear the baby (bawl, ball)?
7. I can (do, due) the work in one hour.
8. The students walked down the (hall, haul).
9. The (knight, night) looked dashing in his armor.
10. I don't have even one (scent, cent) in my pocket.
11. Where did the dog (berry, bury) the bone?
12. You should add more (flower, flour) to the cake mix.
13. He makes a lot of noise when he (chews, choose).
14. My father was the (air, heir) to a large fortune.
15. A (loan, lone) pine tree stood in the yard after the tornado passed.
16. If you quote from another author, it's important to (cite, sight) the information.
17. The buildings were so damaged, we had to (raise, raze) them to the ground.
18. Tightrope walking is an amazing (feet, feat).
19. Tightrope walking requires tough (feet, feat).
20. Things are not always as they (seam, seem).

Discussion:

Martin Luther King day was January 15th this year.

1. Martin Luther King was a minister who fought against racism. He fought for equal rights for people of all colors. Do you think there is still a lot of racism in America?
2. Is there racism in your country?
3. What group of people are discriminated against in your country? Are foreigners discriminated against?
4. What would you do if a friend told you a racist joke?
5. Do you think that most people in the world are becoming more tolerant or less tolerant of others?