

Purpose of Passive Voice in English Grammar

Dr. Abhilash Modi, CAE (Cambridge University English Assessment, U.K.), M.A. in English Literature (M.D.S.U.), M.B.A. (SCDL, Pune)

Article Received: 05/5/2022,

Article Accepted: 07/06/2022,

Published online: 11/06/2022,

DOI: 10.47311/IJOES.2022.4.6.05

Abstract

Language is the indispensable manifestation of thoughts in a human. An animal might feel many things on the level of its survival but cannot express itself to others. It does happen due to the intellectual and emotional differences between humans and animals. Since the dawn of civilization, human has been endeavouring to update every aspect of language, i.e., lexicons, grammar, pronunciation, the structure of sentences and the sole motive behind making all these efforts is to establish a system that is universal and perennial so that all humans can live and communicate harmoniously. Another motive of language and linguistic development was to make the communication precise, concrete, clear, correct, concise, courteous, and composed. To attain this motive only, voices originated, commonly known as Active Voice and Passive Voice. Understanding the existent purpose of Passive Voice may benefit the learners to use it in the most apposite mode with an apt cognizance.

Keywords: Passive Voice, Voices in the English language, Active Voice

Introduction

Passive voice has consistently been underestimated by English Learners, teachers, and even academic writers. During academic tenure, many students frequently do not know the true essence behind the purpose of passive voice and the distinctive approach between Active and Passive Voice. Students are commonly seen struggling with the change they have to make while converting sentences into **Passive Voice** from **Active Voice** merely for the sake of some marks in any academic or competitive exam.

Passive voice or anything allied to the up-gradation of any language was never introduced to help someone clear any exam; it had a different and decisive aim. If one understands the motive profoundly behind the creation of passive voice, then only he would be able to use it appropriately. When the authentic motive behind active and Passive Voice is known, it becomes straightforward to choose sentences for using with either voice, be it active or passive.

Purpose of Passive Voice

Active and passive voices are made to convey the thoughts in different and exclusive ways so that the thoughts can be transmitted accurately with the same intention and meaning referred to by our conscience of us. The essential motive behind Active Voice is to make and

express 'actor' oriented sentences, and the motive behind Passive Voice is to make 'action' oriented sentences.

The existing and most conventional way to indoctrinate passive voice is to mug up some wishy-washy procedures or rules that might help some school-going students or college graduates understand passive voice to some extent to have flying colors in their respective examinations. However, when it comes to implementing these passive Voice rules in practical life, i.e., professional culture, public speaking, day-to-day conversation, and verbal expression, maximum learners find themselves unable to do so as it is a restricted approach. It cannot satiate the sole object of passive voice and its multi-dimensional collaborative methodology.

A primary way to learn, use and implement passive voice is:

The main verb = Be

The only rule that makes the base of any passive Voice sentence is that 'main verb' is equal to 'be' or 'be' performs the same thing that a 'main-verb' performs in active voice. Another thing to take into our conscious consideration is that passive voice does not focus on subjects (the performers & actors of the sentences); maximum times, it does not have a performer in the sentence, and even if it is there, it is in the last of the sentence. One more important and regular thing a learner should know when learning passive voice is that it always contains the main verb's third form in the sentence. When all three basic but essential rules (The main verb = Be, Actor's unimportance, the Main verb's third form) are correctly understood, it leads us to another level of understanding and implementing passive voice in spoken in written English.

The form of the main verb is applied in Active Voice; the same form of 'be' is applied in Passive Voice.	
Active Voice	Passive Voice
Only M.V. 1st form	The first form of Be
<u> </u> H.V. + M.V. 1st form	The first form of Be
M.V. 2nd form	The second form of Be
<u> </u> H.V. + M.V. 3 rd form	The third form of Be (past participle)
<u> </u> H.V. +M.V. ing form	Forth (ing) form of Be (the present participle)
The main verb's third form is common in passive voice or any sentence that has missing subjects or is not prioritized in such sentences.	
Active Voice	Passive Voice
Only M.V. 1st form	Is/are/am + M.V.3rd Form
<u> </u> H.V. + M.V. 1st form	Be + M.V.3rd Form
M.V. 2nd form	Was/were + M.V.3rd Form
<u> </u> H.V. + M.V. 3 rd form	Been + M.V.3rd Form (past participle)
<u> </u> H.V. + M.V.ing form	Being + M.V.3rd Form (present participle)

If an active voice is wholly acquainted with the learners, then passive voice shall be the most straightforward learning.

Learners will have to think of the conveyable sentence in its active voice, and they will have to replace the used main verb's form with the form of 'be,' and the sentence shall be made immaculately.

Some examples can elucidate it impeccably, e.g., if a person wants to convey a thought on a day to day actions or activities of an average person's life without using the person (actor/performer) in the sentence, then he can say, "Utensils are washed, the floor is mopped, food is cooked and served to all people, shoes are polished, curtains are dusted, mobile is plugged in, cash is deposited in a bank, clothes are washed, rinsed and wrung." When the common factor is seen in all the sentences cited above, then one thing which has already been discussed above, as well as the use of the main verb's third form, and the other thing is using the first form of 'be,' i.e., is/are/am in all the sentences. Likewise, every sentence which a human can think of can be made easily by using this method. The learners need to know the active voice and the main verb's form used in all types of sentences, be it tenses or auxiliary verbs. Another thing that has to be taken into priority by learners is to convert primary verb forms into the forms of 'be' while making the sentences of passive voice. It might seem difficult at one glance, but it is such a miraculous formula that can help learners use passive voice meritoriously and with a palpable method.

I thought about given illustrations are being transmitted into words without orienting the performer in the sentence and how this research can help make the sentence in a fraction of seconds. An endeavor is made to understand this:

Thought - Suggestion in the present.

Passive Voice - Good behaviors should be discussed and lived in every family. (Sentence is not showing the performer. What is discussed is also not written in the sentence. For suggestion, 'should' is applied, and 'should' contains the main verb's first form with it, so here we are seeing a change from the main verb's first form into the first form of 'be' and the main verb's third form 'discussed' is coming as it is cited before for passive voice.)

Thought – Probability in the past.

Passive Voice – Society could have been improved. (Sentence is not showing the performer. Who is improving is not written in the sentence. For Probability in the past, 'could have' is applied, and 'could have' contains the main verb's third form, so here we see a change from the main verb's third form into the third form of 'be,' i.e., been. The main verb's third form, 'improved,' is coming as it is cited before for passive voice.)

Thought – Assurance or accomplishment in the future.

Passive Voice – Arrangements will have been done so smoothly. (Sentence is not showing the performer. Who is making the arrangements is not written in the sentence? For Assurance or accomplishment in the future, 'will have' is applied, and 'will have' contains the main verb's third form with it, so here we are seeing a change from the main verb's third form into the third form of 'be,' i.e., been. The main verb's third form, 'done,' is coming as it is cited before for passive voice.)

Thought – Any incident in the past.

Passive Voice – That girl was kidnapped on a quiet road. (Sentence is not showing the performer. Who is kidnapping the girl is not written in the sentence. For Any incident in the

past, 'main verb second form' is applied, and 'main verb second form' does not contain any other helping verb with it, so here we are seeing a change from the main verb's second form into the second form of 'be,' i.e., was/were. The main verb's third form, 'kidnapped,' is coming as it is cited before for passive voice.)

Thought – Present with more details & specifications.

Passive Voice – Money is being spent on marriage parties to be sustained in society. (Sentence is not showing the performer. Who is spending the money is not written in the sentence. For showing the Present with more details & specifications, 'is/are/am' is applied, and 'is/are/am' contains the main verb's ing form with it, so here we see a change from the Main verb's ing form into ing form of 'be,' i.e., being. The main verb's third form, 'spent,' is coming as it is cited before for passive voice.)

Thought – Recent accomplishment.

Passive Voice – The result has been announced, and students have been informed. (Sentence is not showing the performer. Who is announcing the results is not written in the sentence. For Recent accomplishments in the present, 'has/have' is applied, and 'has/have' contains the main verb's third form with it, so here we are seeing a change from the main verb's third form into the third form of 'be,' i.e., been. The main verb's third form, 'announced,' is coming as it is cited before for passive voice.)

Thought – Future with little details.

Passive Voice – Your pizza will be delivered to your doorstep soon. (Sentence is not showing the performer. Who is delivering the pizza is not written in the sentence. For little details in the future, 'will' is applied, and 'will' contains the main verb's first form, so we see a change from the main verb's first form into the first form of 'be,' i.e., be. The main verb's third form, 'delivered,' is coming as it is cited before for passive voice.)

Thought – Present aspiration cum desire.

Passive Voice – Many dreams have to be achieved by him. (Sentence is not showing the performer. Who is achieving the dream is not written in the sentence. For Present aspiration, cum desire, 'has to/have to' is applied, and 'has to/have to' contains the main verb's first form with it, so here we are seeing a change from the main verb's first form into the first form of 'be,' i.e., be. The main verb's third form, 'achieved,' is coming as it is cited before for passive voice.)

Thought – Past habits or regular activities.

Passive Voice – Things used to be done relatively smoothly in the past. (Sentence is not showing the performer. Who is doing the things is not written in the sentence. For Past habits or regular activities, 'used to' is applied, and 'used to' contains the main verb's first form with it, so here we are seeing a change from the main verb's first form into the first form of 'be,' i.e., be. The main verb's third form, 'done,' is coming as it is cited before for passive voice.)

Thought – Dead past.

Passive Voice – The battle had ended after five days. (Sentence is not showing the performer. Who is ending the battle is not written in the sentence. For Dead past, 'had' is

applied, and 'had' contains the main verb's third form, so we see a change from the main verb's third form into the third form of 'be,' i.e., been. The main verb's third form, 'ended,' is coming as it is cited before for passive voice.)

Thought – Present capability.

Passive Voice – Ability and talent can easily be nurtured in every kid if he is given proper understanding. (Sentence is not showing the performer, who is nurturing, is not written in the sentence). For present capability, 'can' is applied, and 'can' contains the main verb's first form, so here we see a change from the main verb's first form into the first form of 'be,' i.e. 'be The main.' verb's third form, 'nurtured' is coming as it is cited before for passive voice.)

Indulging such belongings with such doctrines can help learners master the passive voice to be more accurate in communication, be it verbal or written. Withholding this phenomenal doctrine is one of the best and the easiest ways to be adept at writing and speaking.

References: Self authored