



**Presentation**



# Passive Voice



PEARSON  
Longman



# Crime Report

## ***Examples of Passive Voice:***

On the night of January 12th, *Star Video* on Main Street was burglarized. The police reported the following: The glass door was broken and the alarm was disconnected. The suspect, who was watching a video, was found in a back room. Police were led to the suspect by a trail of popcorn and gummy bears. He was taken to the police station for questioning.

# Legal System in the U.S.

## *Examples of Passive Voice:*

If a crime is committed, a suspect is usually arrested and taken to jail. A lawyer is called and the suspect is interviewed. If a trial is necessary, jurors are selected. If the defendant is found guilty, he is sentenced by the judge to serve time in prison.

# Form



Passive Voice = **Be** + Past Participle + (**by** + Object)

Subject	<i>Be (not)</i>	Past Participle	<i>(by + Object)</i>
Star Video	was	burglarized.	
The videos	were not	stolen.	
A case	is	being reviewed	by a judge.

# Active vs. Passive 1



Active sentences focus on the **agent** (person or thing doing the action). Passive sentences focus on the **object** (person or thing receiving the action).



The **police** arrested the criminal.

Subject is **doing** the action.

Active  
voice

The **criminal** was arrested by the police.

Subject is **receiving** the action.

Passive  
voice



# Active vs. Passive 2

## Active Voice

A judge reviews the case.

Someone removed the videos.

The jury didn't find the defendant guilty.

## Passive Voice

The case **is reviewed** by a judge.

The videos **were removed**.

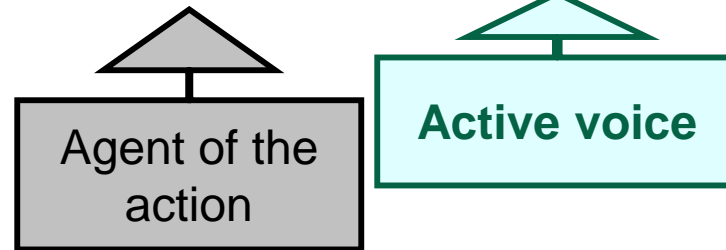
The defendant **wasn't found** guilty.

# Practice 1

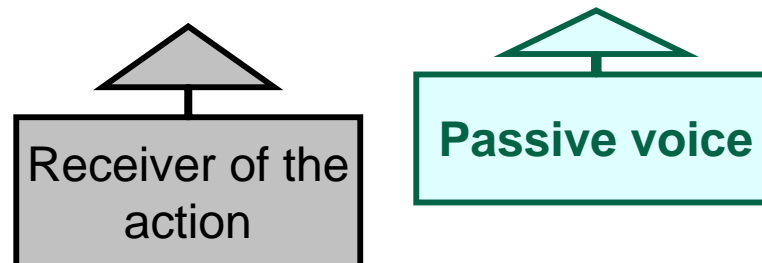
*Identify the agent and receiver of the action. Are the verbs active or passive?*



1. **The lawyer** instructed the jury.



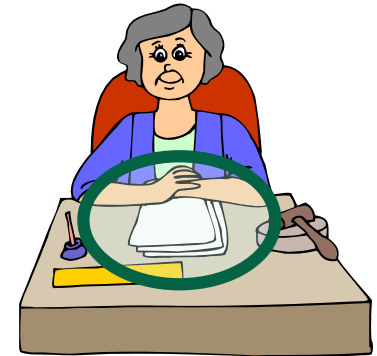
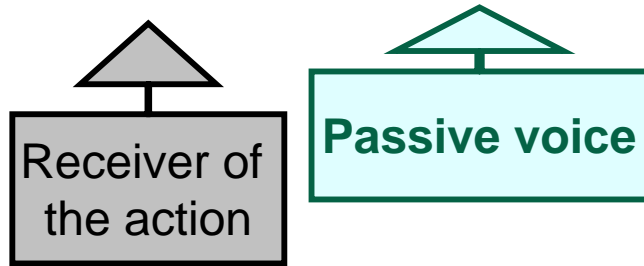
2. **The jury** was instructed by the lawyer.



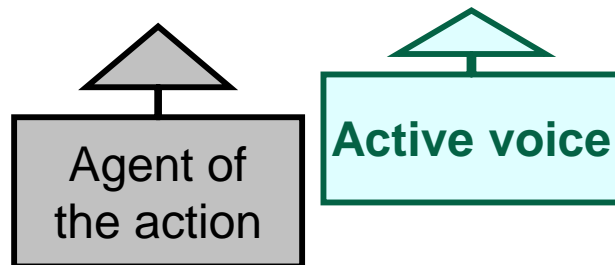
# Practice 2

*Identify the agent and receiver of the action. Are the verbs active or passive?*

1. **The case** was read by the judge.



2. **The judge** read the case.

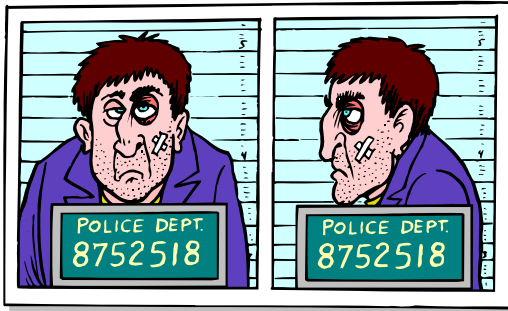




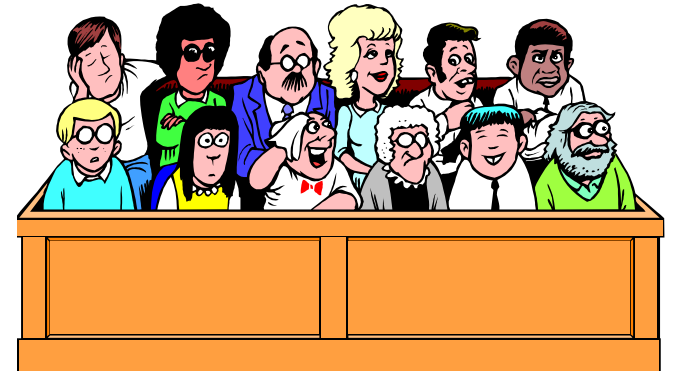
# Use of Passive Voice 1



Use the passive voice when the **agent** of the action is unknown or not important.



Pictures and fingerprints **are taken**.



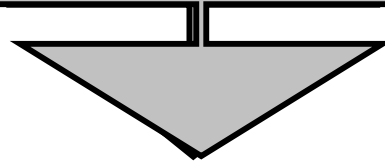
Jurors **are selected**.

# Use of Passive Voice 2

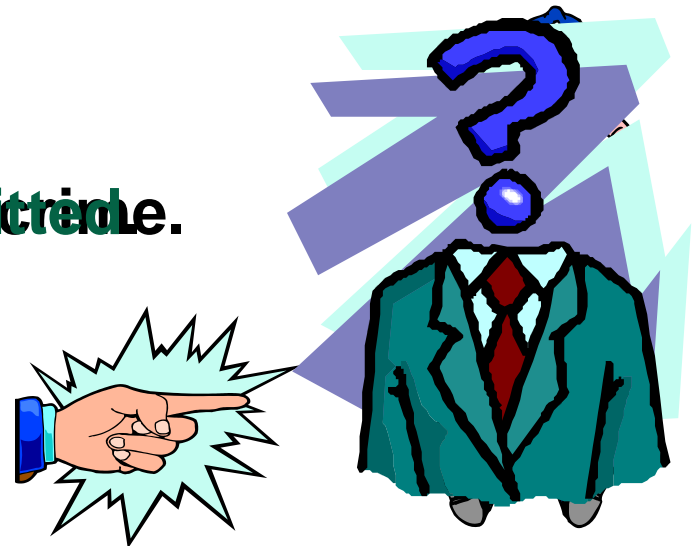


Use the passive voice when we want to avoid mentioning the agent.

Passive voice  
*We don't know  
who is responsible.*



~~Raúl~~ ~~me~~ ~~was~~ ~~it~~ ~~ed~~ ~~a~~ ~~ct~~ ~~ed~~ ~~me~~.



# By Phrases



Use a **by** phrase when it is important to know who performs the action.

The video store **was burglarized**  
**by a former employee.**

The information  
is surprising.



# Practice 3

*Change the sentences from active to passive voice.*

## **Example:**

The lawyers **submitted** evidence.

Evidence **was submitted** by the lawyers.



1. The witness **answered** questions.

► Questions **were answered** (by the witness).

2. The prosecution **raised** objections.

► Objections **were raised** (by the prosecution).

3. Jurors **take** notes.

► Notes **are taken** (by the jurors).

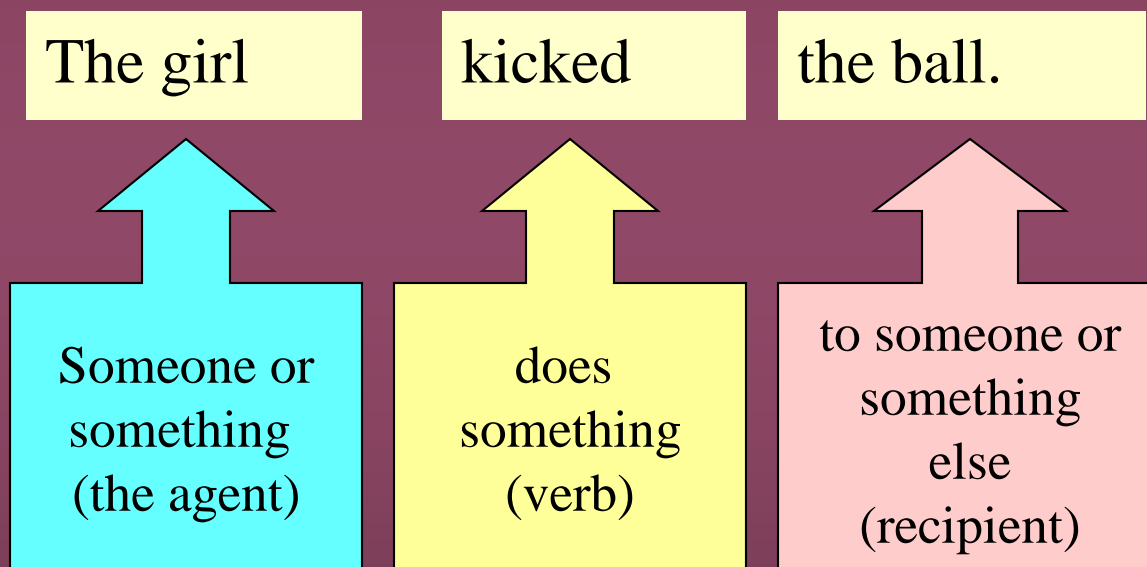


# The active and the passive voice



We usually use the **active voice** in writing and speaking.

E.g.

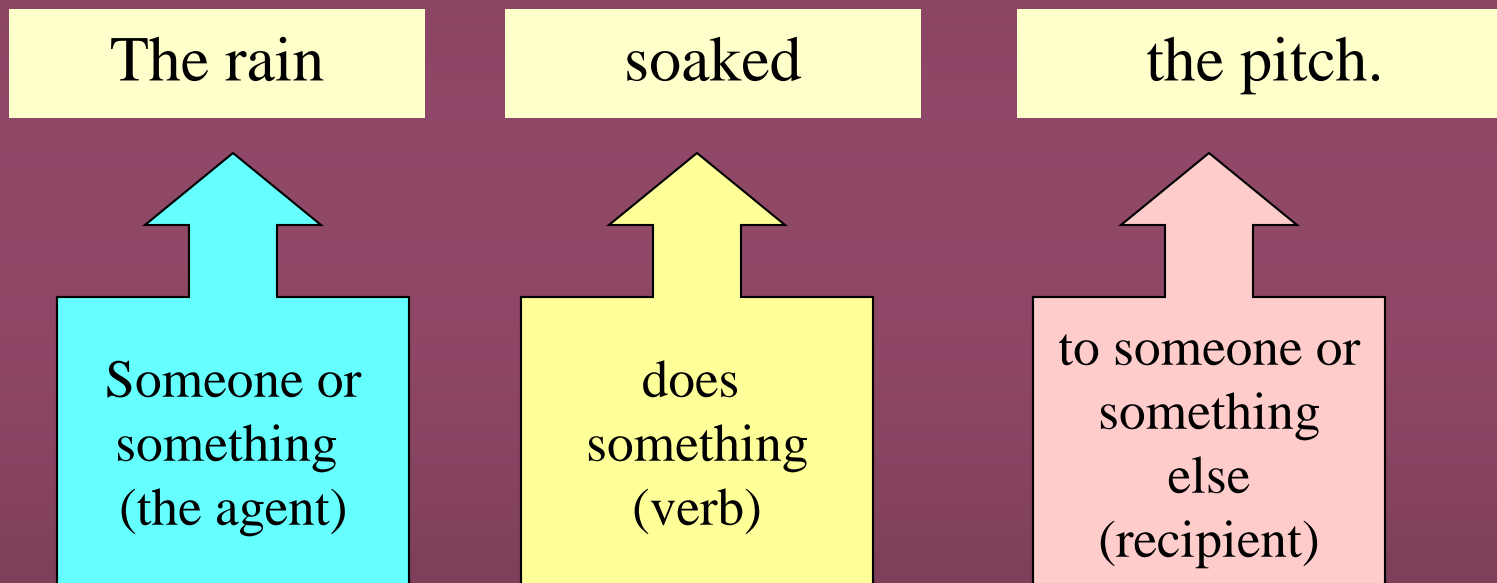




# The active and the passive voice



Here's another example:

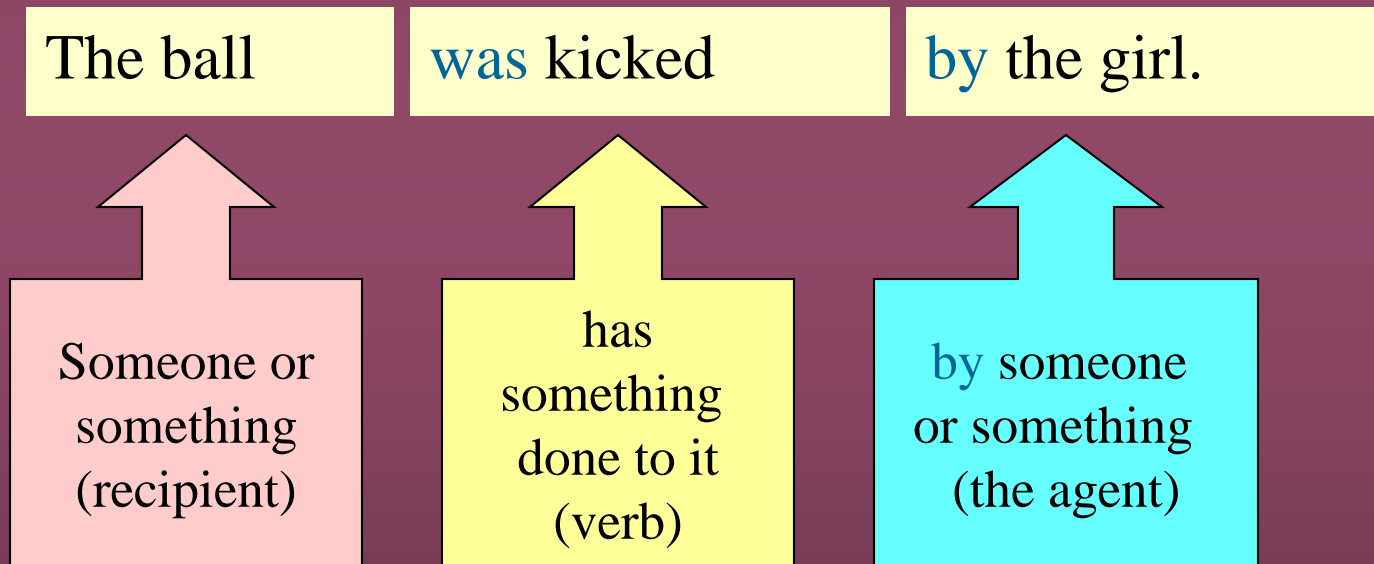




# The active and the passive voice



In the **passive voice**, we change this around, so that the recipient has something done to it **by** the agent. E.g.





# The active and the passive voice



Let's see that again.

The pitch

was soaked

by the rain.

Someone or  
something  
(recipient)

has  
something  
done to it  
(verb)

by someone  
or something  
(the agent)





## The active and the passive voice



In these examples, spot the use of the active voice and the passive voice.

The music was played by the DJ.

passive

The sun was hidden by the clouds.

passive

Delighted fans streamed onto the pitch.

active

Marie wrote the letter to the headteacher.

active

Danny was praised by the headteacher.

passive



# The active and the passive voice



Sometimes in passive sentences, the agent is left out.

The pitch

was soaked •

Someone or something  
(recipient)

has  
something  
done to it  
(verb)

The agent - 'the rain'  
- is left out.

Why do you think  
that the agent might  
be left out in this  
example?



## The active and the passive voice



Compare these sentences. One has the agent, and the other hasn't. Discuss the differences.

I see your car was  
damaged last night by  
my friend

I see your car was  
damaged last night.

Far better to leave out the  
agent if you don't want to be  
involved!

Create your own passive  
sentences which would be best  
without an agent.



# The active and the passive voice



The passive is generally found in more formal kinds of texts, such as reports, forms, evaluations, etc.

E.g. A small amount of water was added to the beaker, while the mixture was heated using a Bunsen-burner.



The passive is used because the person doing the action (the agent) is not needed.



## The active and the passive voice

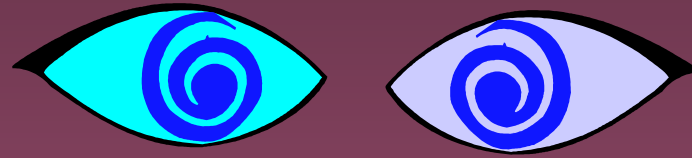


Sometimes the passive voice is appropriate in a story because it is used to describe a person being affected by events, just like in this passage:

In the middle of the night Sebastian was woken by the most hideous scream. He jerked upright and his eyes sprang open. He was even more terrified by what he saw then. His flesh turned to goose bumps and his very blood curdled. His body was gripped by a paroxysm of horror.

(passage courtesy of 'Grammar for Writing' DfES)

# The active and the passive voice



Look out for the use of the passive voice in sentences.

Try to establish the effect of the passive in different texts.

Use it in your own writing when appropriate.

