



## Active Voice vs. Passive Voice

### What are active and passive voice?

Active voice and passive voice are grammatical sentence structures that are used in writing. Everyone uses both active and passive voice in their writing, and may not even be aware of the differences. So, what are the differences?

### Active Voice

A sentence is written in active voice when the noun acts upon the verb. In other words, the subject directly performs the action.

- The monkey ate the banana.
- John writes essays every week.

### Passive Voice

For passive voice, it is the opposite, and the verb acts upon the noun.

- The banana was eaten by the monkey.
- Essays are written by John every week.

### Is there a preference in writing?

Although the sentence examples of active voice and passive voice provided essentially mean the same, writing should mostly be in **active voice**. Sentences written in active voice express ideas and arguments more effectively, and are clearer. Additionally, these sentences emphasize the subject over the action. The sentences are shorter, more concise, and go straight to the point.

### When is it okay to use passive voice?

Passive voice can be useful when the writer wants to emphasize the action over the subject. This is often used in news reports. For example:

- The house was broken into by a large bear.

Passive voice is also acceptable when the identity connected to the subject is unknown, for example, works written by anonymous authors:

- Beowulf was written between 700 and 750.