

The term “voice” is used in grammar to indicate if the structure of a sentence is **active** or **passive**. In active sentences, the doer of the action appears as the subject of the sentence. In passive sentences, the emphasis shifts to the receiver of the action.

Tense	Active Voice Form	Passive Voice Form
<i>Present</i>	I bake cakes.	The cakes are baked by me.
<i>Past</i>	I baked cakes.	The cakes were baked by me.
<i>Future</i>	I will bake cakes.	The cakes will be baked by me.
<i>Present Perfect</i>	I have baked the cakes.	The cakes have been baked by me.
<i>Past Perfect</i>	I had baked the cakes.	The cakes had been baked by me.
<i>Future Perfect</i>	I will have baked the cakes.	The cakes will have been baked by me.

Passive voice should rarely occur in good writing because it dislocates the action and creates wordiness, unnatural syntax, stale action, and indirect information, making the paper weak and distracting. Passive voice is only acceptable under certain circumstances.

Passive voice is allowed:	Example:	Reason for Using Passive voice:
To call attention to the receiver of the action rather than the performer of the action.	The two pieces of leftover cake were consumed. <i>Active voice: Someone consumed the two pieces of leftover cake.</i>	The writer wished to emphasize that the cake was eaten, not that an unknown person ate the cake.
To indicate the action’s receiver when its performer is unknown or unimportant.	A plate with chocolate crumbs was left by the sink. <i>Active voice: Andrew left a plate with chocolate crumbs by the sink.</i>	The writer wished to emphasize that the cake is gone; she doesn’t want to identify who ate it.
To avoid calling attention to the performer of the action.	The cake-eater will be punished. <i>Active voice: Mom will punish the cake-eater.</i>	The punisher has a concealed identity. The writer wished to emphasize that justice will be enforced, not that one specific person is going to punish another.