

# PASSIVE AND ACTIVE VOICE

## Active or passive?

I'm very active. My friend is passive – he likes to lie on the sofa all day. But what's that got to do with sentences?



- 1** Sentences in the **ACTIVE VOICE** start with the people or things **doing the action**. Sentences in the **PASSIVE VOICE** start with the people or things **having the action done to them**.

Notice that we use the **preposition 'by'** in front of the person or thing that does the action in **passive** sentences.

Active	Passive
<i>This machine cuts the wood.</i>	<i>The wood is cut by this machine.</i>
<i>The dog ate my homework.</i>	<i>My homework was eaten by the dog.</i>



- 2** In **PASSIVE SENTENCES**, you **don't** always have to say **who** or **what** did the action.

That might be because it **doesn't matter**:

*The cathedral **was built** six hundred years ago.*

Or it might be because you would **prefer not to say**:

*All the cake's **been eaten**.*



- 1** Write 'A' for active voice or 'P' for passive voice next to each of these sentences

Two-Minute Test!

- a) *We were taken to our seats.* .....
- b) *Luke fell off his bike.* .....
- c) *All the men were tall.* .....
- d) *The meal was cooked by a famous chef.* .....

# VERBS AT A GLANCE



Read this beginning of a frightening tale. Use the highlights to help you revise your verbs and tenses!

[1] present progressive

[3] present perfect

[5] past perfect

[4] simple past

[7] modal form

[1] present progressive

I **am writing** [1] this down for you, my best friend, in case anything happens to me. As you **know** [2], I **have always wanted** [3] to visit the old ruins. Today I **did**. [4] Once it **had been** [5] home to Sir Terri Fying and his wife Lady Sue Pernatural. But after they **had died** [5] in mysterious circumstances, people started seeing a headless ghost chasing another one around the castle walls.

Anyway, yesterday it **was** [4] a cold, damp night. I **took out** [4] my torch, and **pushed** [4] open the rusty, iron door. All around the wind **was howling** [6] and bats **were swooping** [6] down just above my head. I **am** [2] usually quite a brave person as you know, but this made me quiver and quake. I **dislike** [2] bats intensely.

Suddenly, my torch went out. I **should have** [7] checked the batteries! They were dead. Even worse, I **could see** [7] a strange figure. It was floating down the castle steps!

My throat was **grabbed by** [8] an unknown, icy hand. Then a deep, deathly voice spoke.

'What **are you doing** [1] here, boy?

'N-n-nothing,' I gasped. I began to feel faint. Everything went dark.

Next thing I knew, I was lying on my bed. Safe – for now. But I am staying alert.

[2] simple present

[4] simple past

[6] past progressive

[2] simple present

[8] passive form

1 Underline or circle any **other** uses of:

- a) the present simple
- b) the past simple
- c) the past progressive
- d) the present progressive

2 Continue the story in a spooky way.

Start: *It's now a week later. You won't believe what just happened ...*

Challenge!

# SATs PRACTICE

Do you think you've triumphed over tenses? Know your past simple from the present progressive? Now's your chance to try out some SATs-style questions!

## How to do it

Look at this SATs-style question:

This tells you  
**what to do**

This refers to the  
first column

Tick one box in each row to show if the sentence is in the present progressive or the past progressive.

These are the two  
tenses you must  
choose from.

past tense of 'to be' (was)  
and 'ing' verb tells you this  
is the past progressive form

present  
tense of  
'to be'

Sentence	Present progressive	Past progressive
Mandy <b>was</b> <b>dancing</b> the salsa at the school talent show.		✓
Mandy's dance moves <b>are</b> <b>getting</b> better all the time.	✓	
Mandy <b>is</b> <b>aiming</b> to be a professional dancer.	✓	

## Your Turn: SATs-style practice

Try answering these questions.

1 Which of these sentences is in the present perfect tense?

Tick one.

- I have entered the talent show.
- They had entered the talent show.
- They are entering the talent show.
- They were entering the talent show.

② Draw a line to match the **sentence parts**.

**Part 1**

**Part 2**

We knocked at the door and

play video games.

My cousins came round and we

go inside.

You should take off your shoes and

played video games.

Most weekends I go to my  
friend's and we

went inside.

③ Rewrite the sentence below so that it is in the **active voice**.  
Remember to punctuate your sentence correctly.

The poem was written by my friend.

.....

④ **Underline the modal verb** in each sentence below.

Reece won't come out of his bedroom.

I think I might have broken my leg.

You really shouldn't be so rude to your parents.

She didn't think she could walk that far.