

# Passive and Active: Do You Know the Difference?



## Task 1

Read the story and follow the instructions underneath.

1. Gary was having a bad day. He accidentally threw his favourite magazine in the bin. He then banged his leg on a chair and found his mum had shrunk his best sweater.
  - Mark the subject, verb and object on the sentences by writing s,v, or o above the words.
  - Now read the second version of the story.
2. It was a bad day for Gary. His favourite magazine was accidently thrown in the bin. His leg was banged on a chair and his best sweater had shrunk in the wash.
  - Mark the subject, verb and object in the same way as before.
  - Can you say what is different about this version of events?

## Task 2

Think about these questions for a class discussion.

- In version one of the story, which people are to blame for Gary's bad day?
- In version two, which people are to blame for Gary's bad day?
- Look at the way version two is written. How does this affect how we think about Gary's day.

## Task 3

Can you make these active sentences into passive sentences?

1. Emma writes up to ten letters a day.

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2. The lion enthusiastically gobbles his meat.

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3. Mermaids often sing the most melodious and beautiful tunes.

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## Task 4

Look carefully at the three situations below. Decide whether it would be better to use the passive sentence or the active sentence in each situation and explain why.

1. A mum is telling off her daughter, she is angry and wants the daughter to know. Tick the one you choose.

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Elizabeth, you have smashed my best vase!

Elizabeth, the vase has been smashed!

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2. Tony is telling his neighbour that her cat has been killed.

I'm so sorry, a car ran over Tiddles.

I'm so sorry, Tiddles was run over by a car.

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3. A child is explaining where the cookies went.

As I left the kitchen, I ate the cookies.

As I left the kitchen, the cookies were eaten.

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# Passive and Active:

## Do You Know the Difference? Answers

### Task 1

1. Gary was having a bad day. He accidentally threw his favourite magazine in the bin. He then banged his leg on a chair and found his mum had shrunk his best sweater.
2. It was a bad day for Gary. His favourite magazine was accidently thrown in the bin. His leg was banged on a chair and his best sweater had shrunk in the wash.

### Task 2

**Class discussion - answers may vary.**

### Task 3

Can you make these active sentences into passive sentences?

1. Emma writes up to ten letters a day.  
**Up to ten letters a day are written by Emma.**
2. The lion enthusiastically gobbles his meat.  
**Meat is enthusiastically gobbled by the lion.**
3. Mermaids often sing the most melodious and beautiful tunes.  
**The most melodious and beautiful tunes are sung by mermaids.**

### Task 4

1. A mum is telling off her daughter, she is angry and wants the daughter to know. Tick the one you choose.

- Elizabeth, you have smashed my best vase!
- Elizabeth, the vase has been smashed!

**Sentence 'a' would be better to use because it puts the blame onto Elizabeth. The subject is doing the action.**

2. Tony is telling his neighbour that her cat has been killed.
- I'm so sorry, a car ran over Tiddles.
- I'm so sorry, Tiddles was run over by a car.

**Sentence 'b' would be best because it doesn't put any blame on anyone.**

3. A child is explaining where the cookies went.

As I left the kitchen, I ate the cookies.

As I left the kitchen, the cookies were eaten.

**Sentence 'b' would be best for the child to use because they don't admit eating the cookies, it could have been someone else.**