

# Active/Passive Voice and Parallel Structure

## Using Passive Vs. Active voice:

The voice indicates whether the subject of a sentence is the actor or the receiver of the action.

You want to use **active voice** whenever it is possible because sentences with a passive voice tend to be wordier and vaguer.

- In a sentence written in the **active voice**, the **subject *performs* the action**.
  - o Ex: The cat scratched the man.
  - o Ex: The tenant believes that the property owner must hire a plumber as part of the contract.
- In a sentence written in the **passive voice**, the **subject *receives* the action**.
  - o Ex: The man was scratched by the cat.
  - o Ex: It is believed by the tenant that a plumber's services should be part of the contract by the property owner.

## Practice Sentences:

The following sentences are written in passive voice. Rewrite them using active voice.

1. The school was struck by lightning.
2. This morning the burglar was arrested by the police.
3. One type of air pollution is caused by hydrocarbons.
4. An elaborate supper for the miners was prepared by Mr. Patel and his children.
5. The cookies were stolen by my sister.
6. New York City's Central Park was designed in 1857 by F.L. Olmsted and Calbert Vaux.
7. It was decided by the court that the contract was invalid.
8. The first commercially successful portable vacuum cleaner was invented by a janitor who was allergic to dust.
9. After Leonardo da Vinci's death, the Mona Lisa was purchased by King Francis I of France.

10. *The Great Gatsby* is a 1925 novel written by F. Scott Fitzgerald which takes place in the Jazz Age.

## Parallel Structure:

Parallel structure means using the same pattern of words to show that two or more ideas are of the same importance. This can be used on a word, phrase, or clause level.

**Be careful to not mix the different forms. If you decide to use a certain tense and form, stick with the tense.**

- With Present Participle (-ing form of words)

- *Not Parallel:* Jen likes **to swim**, **jogging**, and **bicycling**
- *Parallel:* Jen likes **swimming**, **jogging**, and **bicycling**.

- With Infinitive Phrases

- *Not Parallel:* Jen likes **to swim**, **to jog**, and **bicycling**.
- *Parallel:* Jen likes **to swim**, **jog**, and **ride a bicycle**.

- With Clauses

- *Not Parallel:* The coach told the players **that they should get** a lot of sleep, **that they should not eat** too much, and **to do** some warm-up exercises before the game.
- *Parallel:* The coach told the players **that they should get** a lot of sleep, **that they should not eat** too much, and **that they should do** some warm-up exercises before the game.

OR

- *Parallel:* The coach told the players that they should **get** a lot of sleep, not **eat** too much, and **do** some warm-up exercises before the game.

- With Adverbs

- *Not Parallel:* The production manager was asked to write his report **quickly**, **accurately**, and **in a detailed manner**.
- *Parallel:* The production manager was asked to write his report **quickly**, **accurately**, and **thoroughly**.

- Lists After a Colon

- ***Not Parallel:*** The dictionary can be used to find everything: **word meanings, pronunciations, correct spellings**, and **looking up irregular verbs**.
- ***Parallel:*** The dictionary can be used to find everything: **word meanings, pronunciations, correct spellings**, and **irregular verbs**.