

GED 2002 Teachers' Handbook of Lesson Plans

Area/Skill - LA, Writing	Cognitive Skill Level - Application	Correlation to Framework - 01.02, 01.05, 01.07	Lesson Number - 07
<p>Activity Title - Grammar—Active and Passive Voice</p> <p>Goal/Objective</p> <p>To help students understand the difference between the active and passive voice and when it is appropriate to use them.</p> <p>Lesson Outline</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p>Verbs have two voices – the active voice and the passive voice. Voice refers to whether the subject performs the verb's action (active voice) or is the recipient of the verb's action (passive voice). Review the handout demonstrating various examples of the two voices and review the explanation of how each is formed.</p> <p>Activity</p> <p>Have the students identify whether the sentences contained in section one of the handout are in the active or passive voice, and then have the students form groups and compose their own sentences using the verbs contained in Section II, and evaluate the sentences in Section III. As a class, discuss whether the sentences the groups wrote are more appropriately written in the passive or active voice.</p> <p>Debriefing/Evaluation Activity</p> <p>As a class, discuss whether the sentences the groups wrote are more appropriately written in the passive or active voice. Explain that it is easy to fall into a trap and use the passive voice more than you should. Sometimes use of the passive voice can make an essay sound more important. But be careful. You can change the whole impact of your message by using the passive voice. You also run the risk of confusing the reader because of awkward sentence structure. This an important point to remember when writing your essay for the GED Test. Make sure that you do not confuse the reader and as a result get a lower score.</p>			<p>Materials/Texts/Realia/Handouts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handout— Overview of the Active and Passive Voice • Handout—Active and Passive Voice Worksheet • Handout—Answer Key Active and Passive Voice Worksheet • Paper, pencils • Newspapers, brochures, advertisements
			<p>Extension Activity</p> <p>Provide students with sample essays which have sentences written in the active and passive voices. Have the students identify 2-3 of these sentences and rewrite them in order to make them more understandable. This will provide students with an opportunity to hone their editing skills prior to the GED Test.</p>
<p>Real-Life Connection</p> <p>Ask the students to review some workplace or communities documents, such as brochures, advertisements, etc. and identify examples of active and passive voice. Have them re-write the sentences in the opposite voice. Ask them which is easier to understand.</p>			<p>ESE/ESOL Accommodations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students an opportunity to develop a learn log that will serve as their notes on what they have learned. • Use color to enhance the material. If you provide the Overview on an overhead projector—use a color to highlight important phrases on which the students can focus.

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Activity Title—Grammar: Active and Passive Voice

Introduction

Say: Some sentences are written so that the subject is doing the action of the verb. For example: The dog bit John. *Ask:* What is the subject of the sentence? What did the subject do? When sentences are written this way, we say that it uses the active voice. But the sentence can be rewritten so that the subject is the recipient of the action. For example: John was bitten by the dog. *Ask:* What is the subject of the sentence this time? What happened to the subject? This is known as the passive voice. The action happened to the subject – so the subject was passive. Can you see the difference between the two sentences? If the action is being performed directly by the subject – it is considered active.

Main Activity

Say: Before we get started working on some sentences, let's review the handout. Have the students get into groups of three or four. *Say:* The worksheet contains some exercises where you can identify whether a sentence is in the active or passive voice. As a group you will also have a chance to write some sentences using both voices. When you complete that part, each group will decide whether some sentences are appropriately written in the active or passive voice.

Debriefing/Evaluation Activity

When students have completed their sentences, have each group present the sentences to the rest of the class. Have the remainder of the class identify whether the sentence was written in the active or passive voice. Have students vote on whether the sentence should have been written in the active or passive voice. If students agree that a sentence would be better written in the opposite voice, have them rewrite the sentence as a group. Compare the sentences to determine which is most effective.

Say: Effective writing is more than correct grammar, spelling and punctuation. It is also knowing how to structure a sentence so that it doesn't confuse the reader. Sometimes the passive voice can be awkward or difficult to understand. However, it can also be an effective way to stress certain ideas.

Active and Passive Voice

1. When the subject of the sentence performs the action of the verb, the verb is in the active voice:

The children played on the swing sets.
Our boss gave us a day off.

2. When the subject of the sentence receives the action of the verb, the verb is in the passive voice:

The swing sets were played on by the children.
A day off was given to us by our boss.

Notice that the passive voice is formed by combining the verb *to be* with the past participle of an action verb.

3. Sentences using the active voice are more direct and because they use fewer words than their passive counter-part, are often easier to read. It is generally considered a good rule of thumb to use the active voice whenever possible.

Manuel employed two computer programmers.
Two computer programmers were employed by Manuel.

4. When you do not know or are unconcerned with who performed the action, then use the passive voice:

The documentary was produced ten years ago.
A wonderful opportunity has been presented.

You can also conveniently avoid naming your subject, or even identifying him or her by gender, to make for more politically sensitive sentences in certain situations. Here, the action, not who did it, is stressed:

The offensive e-mail was circulated.

ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICE WORKSHEET

I. Identify whether the following sentences are in the active voice or are in the passive voice:

- _____ 1. A law office advertised for a secretary in the classified ads.
- _____ 2. The classified ads contained an advertisement for a secretary.
- _____ 3. I applied for the position by sending a resume and cover letter.
- _____ 4. Sometimes, potential employers don't respond to every resume they receive.
- _____ 5. I was called by a representative of the company and invited for an interview.
- _____ 6. Without doubt, they received many applications in addition to mine.

II. Compose two sentences, one on the active voice and one in the passive voice, using the verbs listed:

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Active – to buy | Passive – are bought |
| 2. Active – to report | Passive - was reported |

III. Indicate whether the active or passive voice is more appropriate for the following sentences. If the sentence works better in the opposite voice, re-write it.

- 1. The bed was gotten out of by me at 7:30 a.m.
- 2. I listened to the radio program.
- 3. The meal was beautifully presented.
- 4. All applicants are drug tested prior to being hired.
- 5. It was decided by me that Tanya should be the designated driver.
- 6. The landscaping was installed by the homeowner.
- 7. The stage was exited by me only after a long standing ovation.

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ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICE WORKSHEET

I. Identify whether the following sentences are in the active voice or are in the passive voice:

Active 1. A law office advertised for a secretary in the classified ads.

Passive 2. The advertisement for a secretary was contained in the classified ads.

Active 3. I applied for the position by sending a resume and cover letter.

Active 4. Sometimes, potential employers don't respond to every resume they receive.

Passive 5. I was called by a representative of the company and invited for an interview.

Active 6. Without doubt, they received many applications in addition to mine.

II. Compose two sentences, one on the active voice and one in the passive voice, using the verbs listed: *Answers will vary.*

1. Active – to buy

Passive – are bought

2. Active – to report

Passive - was reported

III. Indicate whether the active or passive voice is more appropriate for the following sentences. If the sentence works better in the opposite voice, re-write it.

1. The bed was gotten out of by me at 7:30 a.m.

I got out of the bed at 7:30 a.m.

2. I listened to the radio program.

3. The meal was beautifully presented.

4. All applicants are drug tested prior to being hired.

5. It was decided by me that Tanya should be the designated driver.

I decided that Tanya should be the designated driver.

6. The landscaping was installed by the homeowner.

The homeowner installed the landscaping.

7. The stage was exited by me only after a long standing ovation.

I exited the stage only after a long standing ovation.