Answers – Active and Passive Voice 1

You have 7 out of 7 answers correct.

1. In active voice,

Your answer **b) the subject does the action expressed in the verb** is correct.

- a) the subject receives the action expressed in the verb.
- **b) the subject does the action expressed in the verb.**
- c) the verb must show motion (e.g., run, walk, throw).

Active voice means that the subject is doing the action expressed in the verb. In passive voice, the subject is the receiver of the action. (For example, in the passive sentence *The letter was thrown out*, the subject *letter* is receiving the action of throwing, not doing it.) A verb in active voice does not necessarily show motion—the sentence *I hope to see you at the party* is in active voice, even though there is no motion involved.

2. Which sentence is in active voice?

Your answer **b) The cat slept peacefully on the couch** is correct.

- x) We were jolted by the news.
- **✓ b) The cat slept peacefully on the couch.**
- x) The boat was tossed about by the waves.

Only sentence (b) has a subject (*cat*) doing the action expressed in the verb (*slept*). (Yes, *sleep* is an action!) Sentences (a) and (c) are passive, since the subjects (*we, boat*) are receiving rather than doing the actions expressed in the verbs (*jolted, tossed*).

3. In passive voice,

Your answer **a) the subject receives the action expressed in the verb** is correct.

- **✓ a) the subject receives the action expressed in the verb.**
- x) the subject does the action expressed in the verb.
- x) the verb does not express any action.
Passive voice means that the subject is receiving rather than doing the action expressed in the verb. A verb in the passive voice is always an action verb, since only an action verb can have a receiver.

4. Which sentence is in passive voice?

Your answer c) **Eric has been offered a leading role in the play** is correct.

- a) Ilse was tired after her long hike.
- b) Do you think it is time for the pets to be fed?
- ✓ c) **Eric has been offered a leading role in the play.**

Only sentence (c) is in passive voice, because the subject (Eric) is receiving rather than doing the action in the verb, and the verb is passive, formed from the helper *be* (has been) and a past participle (offered). Sentence (a) contains a form of the verb *be* (was); but in this case, *was* is a linking verb with a subject complement (*tired*), not a passive voice verb. In sentence (b), the infinitive phrase *to be fed* is passive, but the verb itself (*do think*) is in active voice.

5. Which statement is most correct?

Your answer b) **Passive voice may sometimes be better than active** is correct.

- x) Active voice is always better than passive.
- ✓ b) **Passive voice may sometimes be better than active.**
- x) Passive voice should be used only in legal writing.

Passive voice may be more effective when the doer of the action is unknown, is unimportant or is better left unnamed, out of tact (e.g., *I was given the wrong directions* instead of *Your secretary gave me the wrong directions*).

6. Which answer is best?

Your answer c) **Both (a) and (b) are true** is correct.

- x) Active voice puts ideas into logical order.
- x) Active voice uses fewer words than passive voice.
- ✓ c) **Both (a) and (b) are true.**

Active voice states the doer of the action, then the action, and lastly the receiver of the action, so the order of ideas is logical. Also, passive voice uses more words because it adds the helping verb *be* to the main verb and puts the preposition *by* in front of the doer of the action.

7. Passive voice is useful

Your answer c) **when you want your message to be tactful** is correct.

- x) when you want your message to be direct.
- x) when you want your message to be objective.
- ✓ c) **when you want your message to be tactful.**
The best answer is (c) when you want your message to be tactful (e.g., I was given the wrong directions). Active voice is more direct than passive. And although some writing uses passive voice to create an appearance of objectivity, the use of passive voice doesn't actually make a message more objective.

Thank you for playing Active and Passive Voice!