

Aggie Grammar Guide: Passive Voice Formation

Answer Key

Intermediate Practice

- 1) Original is passive. Active: Humboldt State University **stated** the reasons.
- 2) Original is passive. Active: In 1983, two AT&T Labs researchers, Richard H. Frenkiel and Joel S. Engel, **developed** mobile telephones.
- 3) Original is passive. Active: The beach cruisers **cause** physical problems that happen with all types of bikes.
- 4) Original is active. Passive: She **was required** to speak English at all times (by the teachers).
- 5) Original is passive. Active: Almost every individual **knows** Apple, Samsung, and Nokia as three well-known companies in the smartphone market.
- 6) Original is active. Passive: Having corn in their diet **is considered** a blessing (by people) because of the values it has.
- 7) Original is active. Passive: The first airplanes **were invented** by the Wright brothers.
- 8) Original is active. Passive: More recently, mobile phones **have been used** (by people) to send a text message.
- 9) Original is passive. Active: Studying abroad **will force** the college student to practice the language.
- 10) Original is passive. Active: Many college students **have considered** studying abroad.

Advanced Practice

While all of the sentences are grammatically correct, what follows are suggestions for more generally effective stylistic choices. This effectiveness may change depending on the specific context of the sentence.

- 1) Often, the passive is preferred as the sentence emphasizes the fact that the crossbars were designed rather than emphasizing any doer. Also, knowing the doer of the action is not necessary to understand the main idea of the sentence. Using the active and inserting a doer narrows the scope of the action considerably and may exclude others who may have designed the crossbars.
- 2) Active (a) is preferred as this choice is the most concise, and it emphasizes the students' ownership of the questions. The other two options place more emphasis on the action of asking questions, which is wordy and not relevant to understand the main idea of the sentence.

- 3) The passive is preferred as the sentence emphasizes solving the problem that may lead to consequences for the Winter Olympics, and this is the main idea of the sentence. Using the active voice and inserting a doer narrows the scope of who or what may solve this problem and may exclude other relevant solutions. Or, the doer may also be unknown.
- 4) Active (b) is preferred as this choice is the most concise, and it clarifies exactly what the author is doing. This choice removes an imprecise verb (“talks about”) and avoids repeating “the author.”