

Aggie Grammar Guide: Passive vs. Active Voice (Style)

Intermediate Practice

Revise the following sentences to eliminate passive voice without altering meaning.

Please note, because revising passive voice deals with style more than grammar rules, there may be multiple correct ways to revise each sentence, although you will see only one option in the answer key. Compare your revision to the answer and determine if one is more effective. One way to do that is to determine which revision has fewer words but still maintains the original sentence's meaning.

Example: *Citizenship **was created by voluntary associations** which **have been noted** for leading people to express themselves and form associations outside the government.*

Revision: *Voluntary associations **created** citizenship, which **led** people to express themselves and form associations outside of the government.*

- 1) Japan is known to have some of the most damaging earthquakes all around the world.
- 2) This is revealed in the first paragraph of the short story when Montessor says: "I must not only punish, but punish with impunity" (Mays 108).
- 3) The honey bee is being annihilated by pesticides.
- 4) Food is connected to religion in these two countries by the meaning of the food used in Catholicism.
- 5) In order to determine Montessor's motives, the reader is compelled to "decipher the circumstances in the story" (Baraban 48).

Advanced Practice

In the following sentences, some passive constructions cause confusion. If a sentence is confusing and should be revised to active voice, revise it to clarify the idea without losing meaning. Are there any sentences that must remain passive? If so, in complete sentences explain why.

Please note, because revising passive voice deals with style more than grammar rules, there may be multiple correct ways to revise each sentence, although you will see only one option in the answer key. Compare your revision to the answer and determine if one is more effective. One way to do that is to determine which revision has fewer words but still maintains the original sentence's meaning.

Example: One major smart phone, the iPhone, which **is produced by Apple Inc.**, has a big share on the industry.

Revision: One major smart phone, **Apple Inc.'s iPhone**, holds a major share of the industry.

Example: Montresor's comment on Fortunato's costume, "How remarkably well you are looking today!", **is linked** to his intentions (Barban 54).

Necessary passive: The verb phrase "is linked" is necessary because what matters here is the relationship between the comment and Montresor's intention. If the writer changed the sentence to include the subject linking the two things (the author of the story), the meaning of the sentence would change and possibly cause confusion.

- 1) The second conducted experiment depended on what the teenagers were exposed to at a young age, whether it was sexual behavior, sexual plans, or the risks of sexual activity was their outcome of how they perceived sexual activity in their life.
- 2) This is one thing that is argued that kept Russia going for as long as it did before World War I.
- 3) My so-called accent is only one example out of many where my conscience is troubled by the comments I hear because of my race and ethnicity.
- 4) In addition, new transportation has been developed.
- 5) With a better understanding and knowledge, a chain that linked the two wheels on a bicycle was created.
- 6) The reasons are well concluded by Humboldt State University, which is one of those universities that offers online education.