



# **Active and Passive Voice**

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The Land of Whispers is a place where people only whisper because they have very sensitive hearing. Most of the time, they like to write out what they want to say. People go about carrying notebooks.



Roberta

We are now at the Land of Whispers. Talk very softly if you don't want to be taken as being grossly rude. Be extra careful Jojo, you have a loud voice.

# ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICE

In using the verb, you can write it in either the active or passive voice. In the **active voice**, the **doer of the action becomes the subject** of your sentence. However, in the **passive voice**, the **recipient of the action becomes the subject**.

Active	Passive
Roberta drives the train.	The train is driven by Roberta.
Roberta leads the group	The group is led by Roberta

As you will have noticed from the examples above, in the passive, the sentence is constructed in a different way. Try to remember this formula : **verb to be + past participle + by (being, for the continuous tense)**.

## Action Voice

The active voice is used when you want to **draw attention to the subject**.

The people in the Land of Whispers seldom speak. They tend to write out what they want to say. They have such good hearing that they can hear a person whisper a hundred metres away.



The active voice is **used specifically with some verbs, such as eat, see, speak and weigh, which refer closely to personal activities.**

The people of the Land of Whispers speak very little.

They eat very little.

They weigh very little.

But they see and hear very well.

### **Passive Voice**

The passive voice is used when **the recipient or action is more important than the doer.**

Three Whisperians were greatly agitated by the sound of Booz scurrying up a tree.

A strong complaint was made to the village headman by the three men.

The passive voice is used when **the subject is obvious**.

A meeting of the village elders was called.

It was decided to allow the children to stay for only half a day at Whispers.

It is also used when **the subject is unknown** or there is **no definite subject**.

Visitors are often given only a one-day stay.

This rule was started a long time ago.

The passive voice is used for **the official statement**.

No visitor is allowed to stay more than one day without permission.

A request for an extension has to be made only at the Foreign Office at Silence Road.



## Exercise A

**There are glitches in the computers which control signalling and communication on the train. Help Roberta write out the message from the Council of Elders (in the passive) and make a reply (in the active).**

### Message

(1) You - hereby inform - have to leave Land of Whispers -  
by this afternoon

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(2) Your - stay permit - caneel soon

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(3) If you - do not comply - all of you - sent out - train -  
confiscated

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(4) Too much noise - create - by one member of group

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(5) Our citizens - protect from - noise pollution

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(6) Your understanding in this matter - appreciated

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## Reply

(1) We - reach - decision

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(2) We - checking our systems

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(3) Once we clear - problem with the computers - which control signalling and communication - leave

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(4) We - know - we cause - a lot of discomfort - tree citizens

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(5) We - send - best wishes - speedy recovery

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