In an active sentence, the doer of the action comes first: The cat chased the mouse. In a passive sentence, the receiver of the action comes first: The mouse was chased by the cat. The passive is built with the verb be plus the past participle, and be carries the tense.

The form in six tenses

Tense	Active example	Passive example
Present simple	She writes letters.	Letters are written.
Present continuous	She is writing a letter.	A letter is being written.
Past simple	She wrote a letter.	A letter was written.
Past continuous	She was writing a letter.	A letter was being written.
Present perfect	She has written a letter.	A letter has been written.
Future simple	She will write a letter.	A letter will be written.

How to change an active sentence

1. Find the object of the active sentence and make it the new subject.
2. Choose the right form of be for the tense of the sentence.
3. Add the past participle of the main verb.
4. Add by plus the old subject only if the doer matters or is not obvious.

When the passive is the better choice

- The doer is unknown: My bicycle was stolen yesterday.

- The

Example sentences

- English is spoken in many countries around the world.
- The windows were broken during the storm last night.
- This bread is baked fresh every morning.
- The new library will be opened next month.
- His car has been repaired, so he can drive home now.

Quick practice - rewrite in the passive

1. The gardener waters the plants every evening.
2. Somebody has cleaned the classroom.
3. They built this school fifty years ago.
4. The teacher will check the homework tomorrow.
5. People speak Punjabi in this region.

Answers

1. The plants are watered every evening (by the gardener).
2. The classroom has been cleaned.
3. This school was built fifty years ago.
4. The homework will be checked tomorrow.
5. Punjabi is spoken in this region.