



CLASS IX & X
ENGLISH GRAMMAR
PART II
LESSON - 10
VOICE

NOTES

In Grammar, **the voice** of a verb describes the relationship between the action (or state) that the verb expresses and the participants identified by its arguments (subject, object, etc.). When the subject is the agent or doer of the action, the verb is said to be in the **Active Voice** whereas when the subject is not the agent but being acted upon by the verb, then the verb is said to be in the **Passive Voice**. For example, the sentence ‘The cat killed the rat.’ is in the Active Voice because the subject is the agent of the action. Similarly, the sentence, ‘The rat was killed by the cat.’ is in the Passive Voice as the subject is acted upon.

General rules to be observed while changing sentences from Active Voice into Passive Voice:

1. The subject of the Active sentence becomes the agent in the Passive sentence and the object of the Active sentence becomes the subject in the Passive sentence.

e.g. The boy kicked the ball. (Active)

(subject) (object)

The ball was kicked by the boy. (Passive)

(subject) (agent)

2. The verb is changed to the Past Participle form and preceded by a form of the ‘be’ verb.

e.g. We keep vegetables in the kitchen. (Active)

Vegetables are kept by us in the kitchen. (Passive)

3. ‘Get’ is sometimes used in place of a ‘Be’ Verb in the passive Voice.

e.g. Somebody broke the eggs. (Active)

The eggs got broken. (Passive)



4. In many passive sentences, the agent is not mentioned. This is because the agent is either unknown or too obvious.

e.g. People speak English all over the world. (Active)
 English is spoken all over the world. (Passive)

5. Only Transitive Verbs i.e. verbs with objects can be changed to the Passive Voice.

e.g. Ram killed Ravana. (Active)
 (Transitive Verb)
 Ravana was killed by Rama. (Passive)

6. In case of a ditransitive verb (verb with double objects), the indirect object is usually used as the subject. But it can also be the direct object.

e.g. He gave a book to me. (Active)
 (Direct) (Indirect)
 I was given a book by him. (Passive)
 Or,
 A book was given to me by him. (Passive)

7. Out of the 12 Tense/Verb forms, only eight forms are used in the Passive Voice.

The following table shows how to change from Active Voice to Passive Voice. Let us take any transitive verb e.g. the verb 'break' -

Tense/ Verb form	Active Voice	Passive Voice
Simple present	break / breaks	is / am / are broken
Simple past	broke	was / were broken
Simple future	shall / will break	shall / will be broken
Present continuous	is / am / are breaking	is / am / are being broken
Past continuous	was / were breaking	was / were being broken
Future continuous	shall / will be breaking	xxxxxx
Presentperfect	has / have broken	has/have been broken
Past perfect	had broken	had been broken
Future perfect	shall / will have broken	shall/will have been broken
Present perfect cont.	has / have been broken	xxxxxxxx
Past perfect cont.	had been broken	xxxxxxxx
Future perfect cont.	shall /will have broken	xxxxxxxx



8. The verb does not change its tense but it is only the form i.e. from active form to passive form or vice-versa which we change.

e.g. They called him a fool. (Active)

Simple Past – Active form

He was called a fool. (Passive)

Simple Past –Passive form.

9. Present Perfect Continuous, Past Perfect Continuous, Future Perfect Continuous and Future Continuous are not used in the Passive form.

10. ‘Do’ and its different forms as helping verbs are changed to suitable forms of ‘be’.

e.g. He does not like chocolates. (Active)

‘does’ as helping verb

Chocolates are not liked by him. (Passive)

(a form of ‘be’)

11. A Preposition is used before the agent in Passive Voice. Usually, this preposition is ‘by’ but it can also be ‘with’, ‘in’, ‘to’ etc.

e.g. (a) He made toys yesterday. (Active)

Toys were made by him yesterday. (Passive)

(b) I know him. (Active)

He is known to me. (Passive)

12. In Imperative sentences, generally ‘let’ is used in the passive but there are other ways of changing too.

e.g. (a) Do the work. (Active)

Let the work be done. (Passive)

(b) Please help me. (Active)

You are requested to help me. (Passive)

13. Prepositions which go together with the verbs are not dropped while changing from Active Voice to Passive Voice.

e.g. The Principal will look into the matter. (Active)

The matter will be looked into by the Principal. (Passive)



14. Certain verbs which are ‘Active’ in form but ‘Passive’ in meaning are called Quasi-Passive verbs and the sentences with them are called Quasi-Passive sentences. The voice of such sentences can be changed.

e.g. Sugar tastes sweet. (Quasi-Passive Active)

Sugar is sweet when it is tasted. (Quasi-Passive Passive)

15. Certain constructions bring out the full infinitives in the passive.

e.g. They made us suffer. (Active)

He was made to suffer. (Passive)

16. Sometimes there are certain sentences with ‘auxiliary + infinitive’ combination. In such a case, a passive infinitive is used.

e.g. Thomas should do the work. (Active)

(Auxiliary + infinitive verb)

The work should be done by Thomas. (Passive)

(Passive infinitive)

17. The sentence kind is retained while changing from active to passive.

e.g. (a) You did not answer all questions. (Assertive) (Active)

All questions were not answered by you. (Assertive) (Passive)

(b) Who help you every day? (Interrogative) (Active)

By whom are you helped every day? (Interrogative)


