



active

Active voice verb: An **active voice** verb is an action verb that **shows the subject acting**. Active voice is usually **more vigorous** than passive voice. *Socrates asked a question* is active voice; *A question was asked by Socrates* is passive voice.

Passive voice verb: A **passive voice** verb is an action verb that shows the subject as the recipient of the action: *The books were distributed*. Passive voice can make sentences weak because the subject of the sentence is not doing anything, and passive voice also tends to leave out important information; if I say *The problem was discussed*, we do not know who discussed the problem, but if I say *Johnson and Boswell discussed the problem*, then we have both energy and information. Active voice is vigorous.

Active voice: *The Romans **invented** concrete.*

Passive voice: *Concrete **was invented**.*

Active voice: *Plutarch **recorded** the events.*

Passive voice: *The events **were recorded**.*

Passive voice in science: Scientists often prefer passive voice when they describe the results of experiments. Rather than write “First, *I administered* the anesthetic,” a scientist would write “An anesthetic *was administered* prior to beginning the procedure.” In science the impersonality we avoid in other fields makes sense because it contributes to the objective tone of scientific inquiry. In literary and historical writing, we emphasize active voice.

The emphatic form: We use auxiliary verbs to make a special verb form for emphasis, called the **emphatic** form because it intensifies the verb by adding forms of *do* or *get*. Instead of saying *I like poetry*, we say *I **do** like poetry*. We can frame the emphatic in an active or a passive voice: *I **did** take the quiz*. *I **did** get quizzed*.





Mood: In addition to the six verb tenses and the progressive forms of those six tenses, verbs have **mood**. Tenses can appear in three moods: the **indicative**, the **imperative**, and the **subjunctive**, called *moods* because they involve feelings. The indicative and imperative moods are the ordinary forms—of statement and command—that we already know. The subjunctive mood, used less often now than it once was, applies to wishes and desires. We often use the subjunctive in dependent (subordinate) clauses, after subordinating conjunctions, to express what we wish or desire: *If only I **were** stronger....* We might say that:

the **indicative** is the standard mood,
the **imperative** is the command mood, and
the **subjunctive** is the *WISH* mood.

Examples of the three moods:

Indicative: *I am* he.

Imperative: *Be* at the station.

Subjunctive: *If I **were** he.... I wish I **were** more....*

The conditional: We use the subjunctive to describe our wishes or desires that are contrary to fact, but what if a possibility has nothing to do with wishes? What if it is a simple if-then situation in which an event depends upon a condition: *If we win, we go to the finals.* We often use an auxiliary verb such as *would*, *could*, or *might* to form what is called the **conditional verb**. It is neither a tense nor a mood; it is only a verb form. Sometimes we see the subjunctive in the dependent clause and the conditional in the main clause: *If I **were** wealthy, I **would buy** the land.*

Subjunctive: I wish I **were** the lead actor.

Conditional: I **would** have asked.

Conditional: **Would** you **describe** it to me?

Three forms of conditional: There are three forms of conditional. **First conditional** is for real possibilities: *If I see Melville, I will give him the harpoon.* **Second conditional** is for unreal possibilities or dreams: *If I could see in the dark, I would win for sure.* **Third conditional** is for impossible situations in the past: *If I had known the truth, I would have changed my vote.*