

Active vs. Passive

In technical English it is not important who does the work but that it is done. For this reason most technical instructions are given in the passive voice as the reader of a technical instruction or the person to be instructed needs exact information on the kind of work that has to be done and on how the work has to be performed. In this case, it is of no interest, who the responsible person is.

The basic rules for active and passive voice are as follows:

The object of the active sentence becomes the subject of the passive sentence. The former subject can be added to the passive sentence if necessary, but this is not obligatory.

The following examples show how active sentences (a) are transformed into passive ones (p).

a	The woman cleans the office every day.	Simple Present
p	The office is cleaned (by the woman) every day.	
a	They are repairing the machine at the moment.	Present Continuous
p	The machine is being repaired (by them) at the moment.	
a	He tidied up his desk yesterday.	Simple Past
p	His desk was tidied up (by him) yesterday.	
a	They have completed a thorough training before the project started.	Present Perfect
p	A thorough training has been completed (by them) before the project started.	

It works in exactly the same manner for other tenses which is shown in the following table.

Tense	Active	Passive
Simple Present	Infinitive, he/she/it-s	am/is/are + 3 rd form/-ed
Present Continuous	am/is/are + verb-ing	V am/is/are + being + 3 rd form/-ed
Simple Past	2 nd form (irregular verbs) or -ed	was/were + 3 rd form/-ed
Past Continuous	was/were + verb-ing	was/were + being + 3 rd form/-ed
Present Perfect	has/have + 3 rd form/-ed	has/have + been + 3 rd form/-ed
Present Perfect Cont.	has/have been + verb-ing	has/have + being + 3 rd form/-ed
Past Perfect	had + 3 rd form/-ed	had + been + 3 rd form/-ed
Past Perfect Cont.	had been + verb-ing	had + being + 3 rd form/-ed
Will-Future	will/won't + infinitive	will/won't + be + 3 rd form/-ed
Going to-Future	going to + infinitive	going to + be + 3 rd form/-ed
Modal verbs	may/can/might/should + infinitive	may/can/might/should + be + 3 rd form/-ed

Adjective vs. Adverb

Adjectives are used to describe what something is like (the state of something), while adverbs are used to describe how something is done. Adjectives are, therefore, used after forms of to be and other stative verbs. If one adjective is followed by another, the first usually becomes an adverb, as the second word is classified by the first one.

Adverbs are usually formed by adding an -ly to the adjective form of the verb. The table shows a couple of exceptions concerning the spelling of adverbs.

Adjective	Adverb	Example
consonant + y + ly	consonant + ly	easy – easily
ending le + ly	le is replaced by ly	possible – possibly
ending ic + ly	ically	automatic – automatically

Exceptions are the words **hard**, **fast**, **early** and **late** because they are adjective and adverb at the same time. Although the words **hardly** and **lately** exist they have a completely different meaning

As already said in the name, an adverb refers to a verb while an adjective refers to a noun. The following examples show the use of adverbs and adjectives.

The new employee is a **quick** worker.
 He understands **easily**.
 They are an **extraordinarily reliable** team.

Subject / Object Questions

In English there is a difference between subject and object questions. If it is asked for the object of a sentence, the question has to be formed with an auxiliary verb, such as **do** in the Simple Present and **did** in the Simple Past. With all other tenses, the auxiliary verb used in the sentence is also used for the question.

Have a look at the example sentences.

He bought a **new fork lift** for the factory.
What did he buy?

I want to buy **another car** next summer.
What do you want to buy next summer?
Who wants to buy a new car next summer?

We are visiting my aunt on Thursday.
Who is visiting my aunt?

They are assembling **the new machine** at the moment.
What are they assembling at the moment?
Who is assembling the new machine at the moment?

Reported Speech

Whenever information has to be passed on from one person to another, people use reported speech to do this. However, some grammatical rules have to be paid attention to.

If the introductory verb is in a present form, nothing happens to the verb tenses, but personal pronouns, time words and determiners need to be changed.

If the introductory verb is in a past form in addition to the words mentioned above, the tense has to be shifted backwards.

An overview of the most important changes is given in the following tables.

Tense shift

Direct Speech	Example (to do)	Reported Speech	Example (to do)
Simple Present	do; (am/is/are)	Simple Past	did; (was/were)
Present Continuous	am/is/are doing	Past Continuous	was/were doing
Simple Past	did	Past Perfect	had done
Past Continuous	was/were doing	Past Perfect Continuous	had been doing
Present Perfect	has/have done	Past Perfect	had done
Present Perfect Continuous	has/have been doing	Past Perfect Continuous	had been doing
Past Perfect	had done	Past Perfect	had done
Past Perfect Continuous	had been doing	Past Perfect Continuous	had been doing
Future I	will do	Future II	would do
Going to – Future	am/is/are going to do	Going to – Future II	was/were going to do
Modal Verbs	may, can, shall	Modal verbs (2 nd form)	might, could, should

Other words

Direct Speech	Reported Speech	Direct Speech	Reported Speech
this	that	here	there
these	those	now	then
yesterday	the day before	today	that day
last week	the week before	tomorrow	the next day
last year	the year before	last month	the month before

Transform the following sentences from active into passive.

1. The maintenance department regularly services the machine.
.....
2. We checked the production unit last week.
.....
3. The apprentice is cleaning the tools at the moment.
.....
4. We will make the plans ready by the end of next week.
.....
5. Before the test we had already worked with the new material.
.....
6. We are going to schedule the meeting for next week.
.....
7. The factory has been producing the new tissues for a couple of months.
.....
8. The accident happened while we were cleaning the machine.
.....
9. The service had been working on the new system for a whole week before they found the failure.
.....
10. You should wear protective clothing in the workshop.

Read the following text and decide whether the adjective or adverb form is the correct one.

Working in a construction department is an (1) **extreme/extremely** (2) **interesting/interestingly** job. The engineers have a lot of (3) **interesting/interestingly** tasks to fulfil. Nevertheless they have a very (4) **challenging/challengingly** job because the decisions they have to make often have a (5) **great/greatly** influence on production.

Lots of small steps are involved in the development of a (6) **new/newly** machine. First of all the drawings have to be made (7) **exact/exactly** and the single parts have to be produced. This is a task that requires (8) **accurate/accurately** work, as every inaccuracy can have an influence on the parts and the machine. If a machine has already been sold to a company (9) **quick/quickly**, production is necessary as the machine is often (10) **urgent/urgently** awaited by the company.

Read the following sentences and ask for the underlined part – you need either a subject or an object question or both.

1. The machine is being serviced at the moment.

2. The mechanic wrote a report concerning the failure.

3. The apprentices are taught the safety rules that are important in the workshop.

4. The vernier calliper is a very useful instrument for measuring.

5. The research and development department has had a problem with a special configuration lately?

Transform the sentences from direct into reported speech.

1. I called you three times last week.

He told me that

2. Can Peter come to the meeting tomorrow?

I was asked

3. The machine has to be checked because there was a problem yesterday.

The mechanic informed the superior that

4. I haven't been in the office for three days because I was on a business trip.

I informed the customer that

5. The production unit has to be exchanged as it is not working properly.

The machine operator said that