

PASSIVE vs. ACTIVE VOICE: HOW CAN YOU TELL THE DIFFERENCE?!

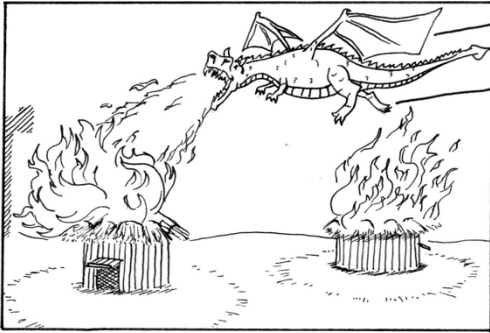
In a sentence written in the **active voice**, the subject is doing the action.

In a sentence written in the **passive voice**, the subject receives the action instead of doing it.

Past tense and passive voice are different.

PASSIVE: The village was decimated by Doug the Dragon.
(Note how the subject receives the action.)

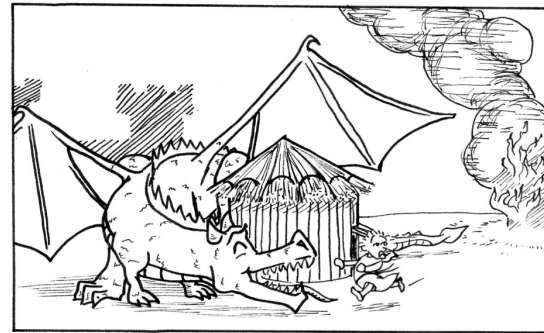
To form the passive voice, use a form of the verb **to be** followed by the **past participle** of the main verb.



PASSIVE: The village was destroyed by Doug the Dragon.
ACTIVE: Doug the Dragon destroyed the village.



PAST TENSE: Doug the Dragon was decimating the villagers while its residents ran away in fear. (Note how the subjects acts, just in the past.)



PASSIVE: The villagers were eaten by Doug the Dragon.
ACTIVE: Doug the Dragon ate the villagers.

There are only a few appropriate purposes for the passive voice:

#1. When the action/outcome is more important than the actor.

#2. To emphasize the receiver of an action, not the actors.

#3. When you do not know/want to conceal/or are not sure who the actor is.



Apart from these instances, it is best to sustain active voice in your writing. While passive voice is wordy and cumbersome, active voice is clear and energetic.

PASSIVE: His destructive accomplishments were relished by Doug.

ACTIVE: Doug relished his destructive accomplishments.

