

Voice Detective

Track who does the action in each sentence.

9.L.GC.2 "Syntax: Apply understanding of syntax to comprehend, analyze, evaluate, craft, and reshape sentences to achieve desired effects."

NAME _____

DATE _____

ACTIVE VOICE

In an active-voice sentence, the subject does the action. This voice usually makes the actor clear and direct.

Lightning split the old oak.

PASSIVE VOICE

In a passive-voice sentence, the subject receives the action. The actor may appear later or may be left out.

The mural was painted by a local artist.

1 SORT _____ 8 items

For each sentence, circle ACTIVE if its subject does the action or PASSIVE if its subject receives the action, then choose two items and explain the clues that guided your choices.

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. The debate team won the trophy. | ☐ ACTIVE | ☐ PASSIVE |
| 2. Scientists tested the water samples. | ☐ ACTIVE | ☐ PASSIVE |
| 3. The missing keys were found under the sofa. | ☐ ACTIVE | ☐ PASSIVE |
| 4. The storm damaged several roofs. | ☐ ACTIVE | ☐ PASSIVE |
| 5. A new library will be opened by the city next spring. | ☐ ACTIVE | ☐ PASSIVE |
| 6. The final decision was announced after lunch. | ☐ ACTIVE | ☐ PASSIVE |
| 7. Our class designed a recycling campaign. | ☐ ACTIVE | ☐ PASSIVE |
| 8. The sidewalk had been repaired before dawn. | ☐ ACTIVE | ☐ PASSIVE |

2 PROVE IT Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # _____ HOW I KNEW _____

ITEM # _____ HOW I KNEW _____

3 MAKE YOUR OWN One of each

Write one new ACTIVE sentence and one new PASSIVE sentence. Underline the subject in each sentence.

ACTIVE _____

PASSIVE _____

CHALLENGE

Rewrite this sentence in active voice, then write one sentence explaining how the active version changes the focus: "The schedule was changed by the principal."

PART 1 • SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The debate team won the trophy.	ACTIVE	The subject, debate team, performs the action won.
2	Scientists tested the water samples.	ACTIVE	The subject, scientists, performs the action tested.
3	The missing keys were found under the sofa.	PASSIVE	The subject, keys, receives the action were found.
4	The storm damaged several roofs.	ACTIVE	The subject, storm, performs the action damaged.
5	A new library will be opened by the city next spring.	PASSIVE	The subject, library, receives the action will be opened.
6	The final decision was announced after lunch.	PASSIVE	The subject, decision, receives the action was announced. The actor is omitted.
7	Our class designed a recycling campaign.	ACTIVE	The subject, class, performs the action designed.
8	The sidewalk had been repaired before dawn.	PASSIVE	The subject, sidewalk, receives the action had been repaired. The actor is omitted.

PART 2 • PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 • MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **ACTIVE:** The drummer startled the audience.
- **PASSIVE:** The audience was startled by the drummer.

Challenge: The principal changed the schedule. This version puts the principal, the person acting, first.

For Part 2, students should identify whether the subject performs or receives the action and may point to a form of be plus a past participle in passive sentences. Accept varied original Part 3 responses when the voice and underlined subject are correct.