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."

ANSWER KEY # Voice Detective

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.

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