



Active and Passive Voice

The voice and strength of a sentence are determined by the predicate (verb and verb phrase). Verbs can make a sentence strong (**active**) or weak (**passive**), depending on whether they're transitive or intransitive, and how they're used in a sentence. This section looks at the use of active and passive voice. Active voice is generally preferred over passive voice because "active" shows action and empowers writing.

Part I: Overview of Voice

Active voice relies on the use of transitive verbs—verbs that aren't linking or auxiliary. While **subject complements** are associated with **passive voice**, **object complements** are related to **active voice**.

M O D E L	Transitive/DO	Fire destroyed the documents.
		ACTIVE
	Intransitive/no DO	The documents were destroyed by fire.
		PASSIVE

Model Explanation:

In the first statement (**transitive**), *fire* is the subject, *destroyed* is the active verb, and *documents* is the **direct object** that indicates the person or thing receiving the action. The transitive verb, *destroyed*, has the subject as the "doer" of the sentence while the receiver of the action is the direct object. In the **intransitive** sentence, the linking verb ("were") has the subject receiving the action instead of performing it; thus it is passive in voice. Notice how more dynamic the sentence sounds in active voice.

Part II: Object Complements

A complement completes the verb or predicate in a sentence. Object complements can be adjectives, nouns, or groups of words. They may come in three forms: 1) direct objects; 2) indirect object; 3) object of a preposition.

GENERAL RULE:

To make a sentence active, move the object to the subject's position. To make a sentence passive, move the subject to the object's position and use linking verbs.

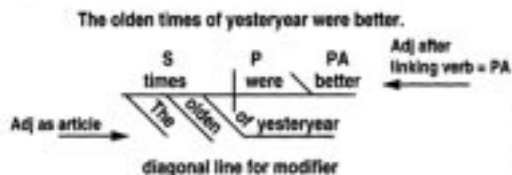
Rule Application:

To make a sentence active (transitive), use strong verbs with object complements such as direct objects, which act as recipients of subjects.

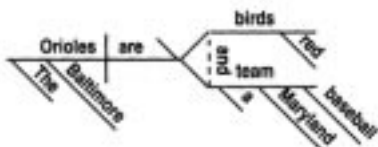


From
 Advanced Straight Forward English Series:
Grammar & Diagramming Sentences
 GP-75
 ISBN 0-931993-75-X

When diagramming adjectives, place them on a diagonal line under the word they modify:

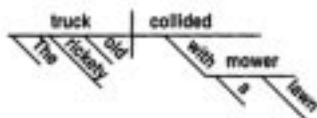


The Baltimore Orioles are red birds, and a Maryland baseball team.



Count the adjectives: *the* is an article and an adjective, *Baltimore* and *Maryland* are proper adjectives, *red* and *baseball* are common adjectives.

The rickety, old truck collided with a lawn mower.



In summary, then, adjectives tell which one, how many, and what kind, and can be made of different types, such as personal or relative pronouns. Adjectives modify nouns and pronouns, and they're similar to the adverb.

Adverbs

These modifiers or descriptors qualify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. They tell how, where, when, and to what extent.

Adverbs (examples)

How	Where	When	To what extent
rapidly	above	now	slowly, rarely, briefly
sadly	farther	later	frequently
happily	there	afterwards	lightly
earnestly	nearby	lastly	always
eagerly	here	then	often, cautiously
angrily	upstairs	before	never

Many adverbs end in *-ly*, but some don't and so they may be confused with adjectives. Just

remember that adverbs are limited to modifying verbs, adverbs, and adjectives.

adverb: She drives carefully.
 adjective: She is a careful driver.

In the first example, the *-ly* ending makes the word an adverb modifying the verb, whereas in the second sentence, *careful* is used as an adjective modifying the noun *driver*. Notice, that as is true with adjectives, adverbs are generally placed next to the word they modify. And also like adjectives, adverbs can be used in comparison.

Adverbs in Comparison

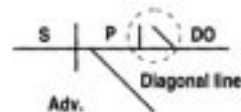
Positive Form	Comparative Form	Superlative Form
early	earlier	earliest
well	better	best
clearly	more clearly	most clearly
fast	faster	fastest
soon	sooner	soonest
badly	worse	worst
little	less	least

Some words may function as adverbs or prepositions (see Chapter Seven), depending on how they're used:

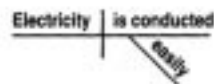
Adverb	Preposition
1. She dared to leap across.	1. He traveled across the state.
2. He set the milk bottle down.	2. She ran down the hospital hall.
3. The stew boiled over.	3. She drove over the icy roads.
4. The dog turned around.	4. She ran around the corner.
5. Attorney Cooper is in.	5. The relish is in the refrigerator.

Always study how a word is used in context to determine if it's an adjective, adverb, or preposition, but generally adverbs are easy to recognize, and for that reason, they're just as easy to diagram. They're placed on a diagonal line underneath the word they modify.

MODEL



Electricity is conducted easily through water.



Notice how the adverb, *easily*, is placed underneath the verb. Here's another example: