**THE SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD EXPRESSED THROUGH AUXILIARY VERBS**

| If the future were clear, we’d act decisively. | If the future could be clear, we’d act decisively. |
| If someone were to escort her, she would go to the play. | If someone would escort her, she would go to the play. |
| If you were to move, would you write to me? | If you should move, would you write to me? |

**EXERCISE B: Using Auxiliary Verbs to Express the Subjunctive Mood.** Each of the following sentences uses a subjunctive verb correctly. Rewrite each sentence, using an auxiliary verb to express the subjunctive mood.

1. If you were less messy, I would not have to pick up after you.
2. This meeting would run more smoothly if he were to leave.
3. She wishes that Kate were relaxed and comfortable.
4. If Noreen were to invite you, would you attend?
5. The house would be warmer if everyone were to keep the windows closed.

**APPLICATION: Writing Sentences Using the Subjunctive Mood.** Use each of the following words or phrases in a sentence of your own that contains the subjunctive mood. Underline the subjunctive verbs in your sentence.

1. require that
2. I suggest
3. as if
4. that she be
5. could be more enjoyable

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### 5.4 Voice

If you studied the preceding sections, you know that verbs change form according to tense and mood. This section shows that verbs also have voice—the ability to indicate whether the subject performs the action or has the action performed on it.

**Voice is the form of a verb that shows whether or not the subject is performing the action.**

Only action verbs can indicate voice; linking verbs cannot. In English there are two voices: *active* and *passive*.

**Active and Passive Voice**

When the subject of a verb performs the action, the verb is active; when the subject receives the action, the verb is passive.

**Active Voice.** Any action verb, regardless of whether it is transitive (with a direct object) or intransitive (without a direct object) can be in the active voice. (See Section 1.2 for more about transitive and intransitive verbs.)

A transitive or intransitive verb is *active* when its subject performs the action.

In both of the following examples, the subjects perform the action. In the first example, the verb is transitive and, therefore, has a direct object, which receives the action of the verb. In the second example, the verb is intransitive; it has no direct object.

**ACTIVE VERBS:** The puppeteer manipulated the strings.

**PASSIVE VERBS:** Leaves gathered in the corner of the garden.

**Passive Voice.** Most action verbs can be passive as well as active.

A verb is *passive* when its action is performed upon the subject. A passive verb almost never has a direct object and is always a verb phrase made from a form of be plus the past participle of a transitive verb.

In the following examples, the subjects are the receivers of the action. Instead of being responsible for the action, they are affected by the action. The first example names the performer, the puppeteer, but the object is now the object of the preposition by instead of the subject. In the second example, no performer of the action is mentioned. Notice that neither example has a direct object.

**PASSIVE VERBS:** The strings were manipulated by the puppeteer.

**The leaves were gathered into large plastic bags.**

The tense of the helping verb *be* determines the tense of a passive verb. If, for example, the form of *be* is in the present
tense, the passive verb is in the present tense, and so on. The past participle does not change. Here is a short conjugation in the passive voice of the verb *believe* in the three moods. Notice that there are only two progressive forms in the passive voice and no emphatic forms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense and Mood</th>
<th>Passive Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present Indicative</td>
<td>he is believed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Indicative</td>
<td>he was believed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Indicative</td>
<td>he will be believed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Perfect Indicative</td>
<td>he has been believed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Perfect Indicative</td>
<td>he had been believed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Perfect Indicative</td>
<td>he will have been believed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Progressive Indicative</td>
<td>he is being believed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Progressive Indicative</td>
<td>he was being believed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Imperative</td>
<td>(you) be believed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Subjunctive</td>
<td>(if) he be believed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Subjunctive</td>
<td>(if) he were believed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EXERCISE A: Distinguishing Between Active and Passive Voice.**
Write the verb from each of the following sentences on your paper. Then label it *active* or *passive.*

1. These essays were selected for their originality.  
2. Our bread truck delivers as quickly as possible.  
3. Murphy had been chosen for the task.  
4. Carefully he removed the glass from the picture window.  
5. They prepared for any eventuality.  
6. Fry the eggs on one side only.  
7. The last sentence in the contract has been reworded to eliminate its vagueness.  
8. A fruit punch will be served at the dance.  
9. My reflection stared back at me from the mirror.  
10. The dog was being rewarded for his quick response.  
11. She threw a handful of herbs into the pot.  
12. Hundreds of applications were received at the personnel office.  
13. His numerous complaints are being ignored.

14. These pants have shrunk at least two sizes.  
15. A single guppy energetically swam around the large tank.  
16. Pools of stagnant water were lying beneath the broken spouts.  
17. The tigers will have been fed by the time we arrive at the zoo.  
18. Wilma’s seeming indifference is misconstrued by her acquaintances.  
19. They discussed their views with the President.  
20. A cold compress was quickly applied to the wound.

**EXERCISE B: Conjugating Verbs in the Passive Voice.** Conjugate each of the following four verbs in the passive voice. Conjugate using only the personal pronoun indicated in parentheses. Use the chart on page 186 as your guide.

1. deliver (with *it*)  
2. praise (with *you*)  
3. nominate (with *I*)  
4. alert (with *they*)

- **Using Active and Passive Voice**

As soon as you can distinguish between active and passive voice, you can use this knowledge to improve your own writing. Most accomplished writers prefer the active voice to the passive voice.

*Use the active voice whenever possible.*

Usually a verb can convey the same information in either the active or the passive voice. The active voice, however, is more direct and economical. Unless you have a definite reason for choosing the passive voice, use the active voice instead. Notice, for example, that the first sentence that follows is shorter and more direct than the other one is.

**ACTIVE VOICE:** Debbie repaired the dripping faucet.

**PASSIVE VOICE:** The dripping faucet was repaired by Debbie.

The passive voice does, however, have two important uses.

*Use the passive voice (1) to emphasize the receiver rather than the performer of an action or (2) to point out the receiver when the performer is unknown or unimportant and not named in the sentence.*
EXERCISE C: Using the Active Voice. Ten sentences in Exercise A contain verbs in the passive voice. Rewrite each of these sentences in the active voice, changing or adding words as necessary. Be prepared to explain which voice is better.

EXERCISE D: Correcting Unnecessary Use of the Passive Voice. Most of the verbs in the following paragraph are in the passive voice. Rewrite the paragraph, changing as many of the underlined passive verbs into active ones as you think necessary to improve the paragraph. It is not necessary to change every passive verb.

(1) He had no time left to wonder why he had forced himself to take a course in public speaking. (2) The summation of the student whose name alphabetically preceded his own was listened to by Ben, standing in the wings of the brightly lit auditorium. (3) The necessary organizational skills had been given to Ben by three months of practice in the classroom. (4) But today the old symptoms of fear were being returned. (5) Now, without waiting for his name to be called, Ben walked mechanically onto the stage. (6) The neatly written index cards were carefully placed on the podium’s solid wooden surface, the microphone was adjusted, and he looked out at the impersonal, waiting sea of faces. (7) A few minutes later, when his speech was concluded, the notes were gathered by Ben and he prepared to walk from the stage. (8) He thought he was being reproached by the audience through their absolute silence. (9) Then the clapping was begun by one person, and suddenly he was washed by waves of applause. (10) Lingering at the podium for a moment, Ben allowed himself to receive their recognition.

APPLICATION: Using Voice Correctly In Writing. Describe an incident, like the one in Exercise D, in which you forced yourself to do something that you were afraid to do. Include two appropriate uses of the passive voice: one that emphasizes the receiver rather than the performer of an action and another in which the performer is not named. Make sure all of the other verbs in your description are active.

Chapter 6

Pronoun Usage

At one time in the English language, both nouns and pronouns changed their form according to their use in a sentence. For example, the form that a noun would have as a subject was different from the form it would have as a direct object. Today, English relies more on syntax (the order of words in a sentence) than on changes in form, or case, to indicate a word’s use. Nevertheless, this old characteristic of English has not entirely disappeared. Nouns still change form when they are used to show possession. An apostrophe and an s (today’s weather) or just an apostrophe (the bees’ hive) is added to the usual form of the noun. Some pronouns change form even more noticeably. We, for example, which is used for subjects (We are leaving), becomes us for objects (Jan gave us another chance) and our for possession (Where are our overcoats?).

This chapter will explain the relation between a pronoun’s form and its use in a sentence and will show you how to use the various case forms of pronouns correctly in sentences.

Case 6.1

In the English language, only nouns and pronouns have case.

Case is the form of a noun or pronoun that indicates how it is used in a sentence.

The following chart lists the three cases—nominative, objective, and possessive—and shows the uses of each in a sentence. Notice that the nominative has three uses and the objective has five uses, while the possessive has only a single use: to show ownership.