**How to Avoid the Passive Voice**

You’ve probably heard that using the passive voice is bad, but it is unlikely that the grammar has been fully explained, at least not in a few years.

Essentially, there are four types of verbs. If you can identify them; you can choose to avoid the passive (it’s not always bad, though. Lawyers use it a lot to make it sound like their clients aren’t responsible for anything\*).

Transitive verbs are verbs that have subjects or objects that receive the action. They are either active voice or passive voice. (The subject either does the action or the action happens without it).

Intransitive verbs have no receiver of the action. They are classified as intransitive complete or intransitive linking. Linking connects the subject to the predicate, usually a modifier of some sort. Intransitive just is.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Transitive Active**The boy kicked the ball.**YOUR example:** | **Intransitive Linking**The girl is tall.**YOUR example:** |
| **Transitive Passive**The ball was kicked by the boy.**YOUR example:** | **Intransitive Complete**The phone rang.**YOUR example:** |

\* e.g. when defending a cigarette company: “The ads were created to appeal to children” sounds better than “My client created ads to appeal to children.”

Label the following sentences TA, TP, IL, IC. If they are TP rewrite them.

1. Rulon was king of the Stapler People.
2. The ocean roared, nearly deafening us.
3. The book was analyzed by our class last week.
4. Ancient and majestic, Machu Picchu draws visitors from all over the world.
5. Listen, jerk, get out of my lane!
6. A dog barks at me every time I pass this house.
7. He was named Chancellor of the Board that year.
8. Frank and Doug were surprised by how much pizza they could eat.
9. The road was finally paved.
10. The piano was played beautifully by the little girl.
11. Her boots stomped all over the floor.
12. The film was terrific, but a little long.
13. The reader can infer that by looking for the symbolism.
14. The tree house was built by my friend Johanna in 1983.