

The active and passive voice

The boy threw the ball. Active.

The ball was thrown by the boy. Passive.

We usually use the active voice in spoken English. It expresses who (or what) did what.

The passive voice expresses what has happened, rather than what was done.

The boy threw the ball. Subject. Object.

The ball was thrown by the boy. Subject. Object.

When we use the passive voice, the subject becomes the object. Rather than doing something, it has something done to it.

The passive voice can be useful when commenting objectively on something:

The source suggests /is suggested by the source

I then added / was added

The passive voice is usually used to sound more formal.