


# EXTREME

extreme  
grammar

making grammar  
accessible to everyone  
by explaining a few  
simple rules



Learning  
grammar is a bit  
like ice climbing:  
sometimes you have  
to hang on for dear  
life.

## PASSIVE VOICE

**Passive voice (n):** Sentence construction in which the object of the sentence precedes the verb. The sentence's subject may follow the verb or may be omitted.

Passive voice and active voice are different sentence constructions.

Passive voice, which is not the preferred organization of sentences in Standard American English, are composed in Object-Verb (O-V) or Object-Verb-Subject (O-V-S) order. Active voice, the preferred organization of sentences, is organized as Subject-Verb-Object (SVO).

Here are two examples, the first is passive voice, the second is active voice.

1. The report was written by the committee.
2. The committee wrote the report.

In both sentences, the subject is *the committee*; the object of both sentences is *the report*. However, the passive voice sentence places greater

emphasis on the object of the sentence, because the object precedes the verb (the object comes at the beginning of the sentence).

The rules of Standard American English--and the expectations of most American readers--is that the subject receives the emphasis. Or, said in passive voice, the subject of the sentence should receive the emphasis of the sentence. Did you notice that active voice constructions are shorter and more direct than passive voice constructions? Good for you!

You can use the grammar checker of your word processing application to help you identify passive voice constructions in your writing.

If you eliminate passive voice from your writing, you will find your work is snappier and easier to read.



### You have to take the plunge!

Learning grammar, like learning any set of procedures, requires a bit of practice and the confidence to do it well!

