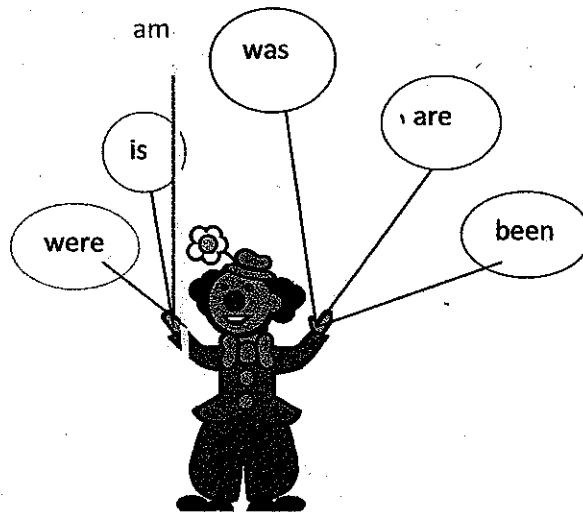


Active vs. Passive Voice

Corny Clown's Clues to Passive Voice

*You can recognize passive-voice because the verb phrases will always include a form of be, such as in the balloons Corny Clown is holding below. ** Be careful not to mistake these verb phrases with linking verbs: (The sky is blue.)



Active Voice: the subject performs the action expressed in the verb.

Example: The clown juggled the balls.

Subject: clown Action: juggled Object: balls

Passive Voice: the subject receives the action expressed in the verb.

Example: The balls were juggled by the clown.

Subject: balls Action: juggled Action was performed : by the clown (*this phrase is another indicator that the sentence is written in passive-voice.*)

When to use Passive Voice:

- When you wish to downplay the action (*Mistakes will be made, and lives will be lost; the sad truth is learned anew by each generation.*)
- When you wish to downplay the actor: (*In the scientific world, the actions of the researcher are ideally not supposed to affect the outcome of an experiment; the experiment is the main focus*)
- When the actor is unknown (*The victim was approached from behind and hit over the head with a bat.*)