**Active vs. Passive Voice**

**The Difference between Active and Passive Voice:**

**Active Voice:** The subject performs the action in a sentence.

Ex. The student wrote the paper.

**Passive Voice:** The subject receives the action in the sentence.

Ex. The paper was written by the student.

Note: Although passive voice always contains a to-be verb, all instances of to-be verbs are not inherently passive.

**When to Use Active or Passive Voice:**

Passive voice works best when you need to strike a more objective tone or emphasize a different noun other than the subject. For example, the following sentence is passive, but it allows us to emphasize Lisa instead of the lightning that struck her:

Ex. Lisa was struck by lightning.

Although passive voice is better suited for some disciplines or situations, you should generally aim to write in active voice. Active voice usually facilitates increased clarity, concision, and interest.

**Practice**

**Directions:** For each of the following sentences, determine if the sentence is written in active or passive voice. If the sentence is active, write “active” in the space provided. If the sentence is passive, rewrite it in active voice. In order to rewrite some sentences in active voice, you may need to supply a subject to complete the action.

1. The award was won by the actress.

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1. At his fifth birthday party, he opened a box containing a brand-new bike.

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1. Mistakes were made.

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1. During the storm, the power outage caused a panic.

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1. Many habitats have been harmed by climate change.

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