

# English composition: voice in a sentence



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The emphasis of the sentence is placed on Jane as the reader is meant to be drawn to the idea of Jane first and foremost. If the emphasis is to be placed on the recipient of the action, passive voice is used. For instance, “ The paper was written by Jane” is in the passive voice. The attention is placed on the paper when written this way. Placing a sentence in the passive voice is also a semantic trick that can be used to de-emphasize a role played by the actor. For instance, saying “ mistakes were made” does not place the blame on anyone person, while “ Jane made mistakes” places the blame firmly in Jane.

Tense in a sentence refers to the grammatical quality which relates when an action has taken place. The main tenses are past, present, and future. For example, “ Jane wrote the paper” is past tense, “ Jane writes the paper” is present, and “ Jane will write the paper” is future tense. These, however, are not the only tenses. These are used to even further define the conditions of a sentence, such as present continuous and present perfect. Present continuous refers to an action that is currently taking place, such as “ Jane is writing the paper,” and present perfect refers to is used to refer to an action that has taken place recently or in general, such as “ Jane has written the paper.” Past tenses and future tenses also have various ways to define further when exactly an action has taken place.