

## Rule No 6. Active versus passive voice

A tendency to overuse the passive voice can lead to awkward grammar. Subjects often become attached or sentences become wordy.

**Lee writes:** “When people spend all day caged in front of modern technology, daily physical requirements cannot be met.” This topic sentence would be more direct in the active voice: “When people spend all day caged in front of modern technology, they fail to meet daily exercise requirements.”:

**Active:** The boy kicks the football.

**Passive:** The football is kicked by the boy.

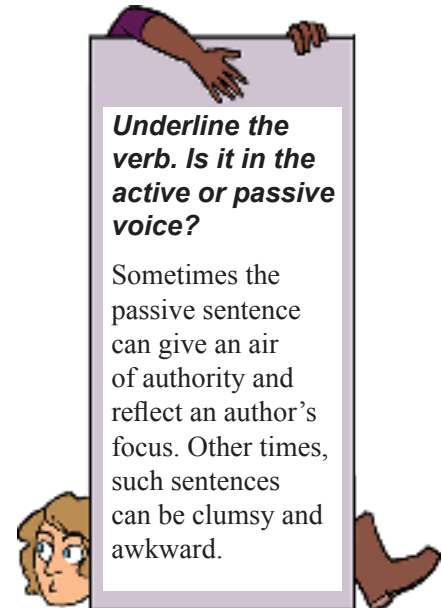
When the verb is in the **passive voice**, the subject is acted upon or receives the action by an agent. Passive sentences may have an agent, “by the boy”, or they may be agentless. “The site must be torn down.”

A verb in the passive form usually consists of:  
**to be (is/was) + past participle (hit/driven)**

Comparisons are being made between Ralph and Jack..



William Golding compares Jack and Ralph.



### Underline the passive verb. Rewrite the “clumsy” sentences in the active voice.

Passive: Joy's mother was being given a different look because of her accent.

Active: People treated Joy's mother differently because of her accent.

1. As individuals we are grown up with a set of expectations and values such as attending university.
2. When he picked up the phone we got cut off.
3. He is being punished for his poor behaviour by the teacher and will get a detention.
4. They are constantly being discriminated against due to their physical appearances and ethnic background.
5. I'm not going to be tricked. Comparisons are being made between the various alternatives.
6. The website run by anonymous bloggers is disgraceful and disgusting. The site must be torn down. Then those who are responsible should be brought to account.
7. There is more work to be done in in controlling smoking in public places.
8. Swinburne should be praised for imposing the smoking ban with sufficient notice.

## Rule No. 7: Use nominals for precision

Why use 10 words when three will do? Writing more precisely and using fewer words is our goal in English.

“**Nominalisation**” refers to the process of changing a verb, adjective or adverb into a noun, or “nominal”. A nominal is a word or group of words that function in the sentence as a noun.

You can achieve greater precision in your writing by using nominals (a group of words). In the following sentence, David Malouf uses three nominals instead of three sentences.

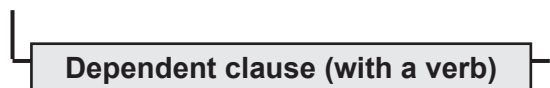
“He is in consequence **the most cautious and reliable of men**, doing all he does with **perfect consideration** and **punctilious rectitude**”. (*Ransom*)

Often an awkward “how” or “that” clause can be replaced by a nominal

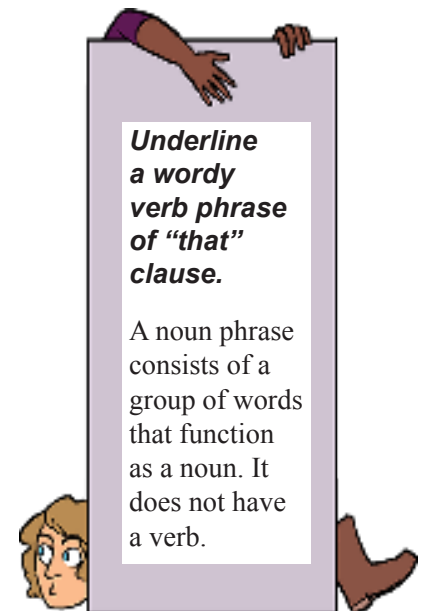
Sentence 1: Major analyses **how** animals should never consider themselves equal to or having identical interests to man.

Sentence 2: Major analyses the animal’s position of unequal, economic power.

The image highlights that teenagers have significant health issues.



The image highlights a teenager’s significant health issues



### Using a noun phrase(s), rewrite the sentence

1. NRL player Alex McKinnon is forced to spend the rest of his life in a wheel chair due to a three-man tackle gone wrong.
2. The author aims to convey what violence does to the human brain and how twisted and sick they can become when there is a disagreement.
3. Blossom Beeby highlights how she was unhappy about being Asian and how she felt after she was accepted being Asian after seeing other Asian people.
4. These qualities, such as peace and empathy reflect on the author’s views on how we should live life.
1. The author had political views on how a resolution should come together and it was not violence.
2. They are happy that they are being selected with the chance of greater opportunities to participate in the Youth Games in Melbourne.
3. Firstly, swings for the disabled would enable them to participate in daily activities they might not have done before.
4. The editor criticises the Minister for not taking the problem seriously enough.
5. The author supports the University’s actions of introducing a total ban on smoking on campus.