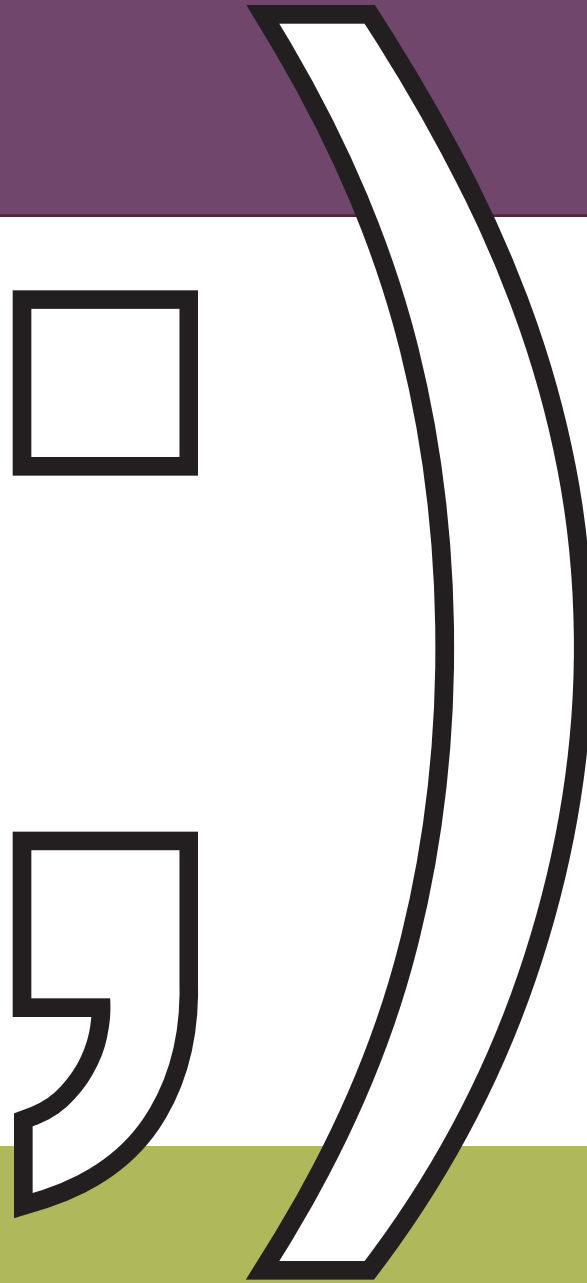


Grammar Handbook



*Must-Have Grammar Tips for EWM
Majors by EWM Majors*

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Introduction

Welcome to Florida State's Editing, Writing, and Media major!

Let me start off by saying one thing: signing up for the EWM major was a really savvy choice on your part. I think you made a good move.

I've been lucky enough to be an instructor of EWM courses for three years now. In that time, I've encountered a group of smart, motivated, and wonderful students—the writers of this handbook are no different.

These writers are EWM students just like you. Just like you, they are clearly passionate about pursuing work in writing and publishing in worlds as various as literature, journalism, fashion, film, public relations, marketing, and international affairs. Others are continuing on to graduate school to pursue a journalism or law degree. Just like many of you, they take EWM classes alongside a variety of classes within other majors, including English, Studio Art, Film Studies, Linguistics, Media Production, Business, Psychology, International Affairs, Public Relations, Political Science, and Media/Communication Studies. Every day, I see them working very hard, every day building stronger ties between the world of EWM and their many other worlds.

As new EWM majors, you probably have these aspirations too, and many of you also bring with you different sets of knowledge from different majors around the university. But despite the many worlds you all come from, there is one thing you all share—and that is language. Whatever direction you want to go in, you'll be using language in a variety of ways—and effective knowledge of grammar, syntax, and mechanics are the foundation that that work will be based on. Knowing this stuff really well will not only make you more sophisticated writers; it will also help your writing stand out and create impact. And I haven't met an EWM major yet that didn't want to create some kind of impact.

The writers of this handbook are more senior EWM students—many of them will be graduating this spring—and having come to the end of their degree, they have a strong sense what knowledge is essential for new, incoming EWM majors. This handbook represents a small glimpse of their combined knowledge.

Enjoy and good luck!

Josh Mehler

Acknowledgements

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Note: This PDF file is best viewed in Two-Page View mode.

1 Semicolons

“The semicolon is, to me, a sort of extra-strong comma.” -Diana Athill, British literary editor

The Basics

Use a semicolon to link two independent clauses that are closely related.

- *Ex. My Rhetoric class is fascinating and confusing; I thoroughly enjoy it.*
These two statements could stand on their own, but they are closely related.

Do NOT use a conjunction with a semicolon.

- *WRONG: My Rhetoric class is fascinating and confusing; and I thoroughly enjoy it.*
(Replace the semicolon with a comma, or just drop the and.)

You CAN use semicolons with conjunctive adverbs, which include:

accordingly	furthermore	nevertheless
also	hence	on the other hand
at the same time	however	so
consequently	likewise	still
first, second, third...	meanwhile	then
for example	moreover	therefore

Be sure to follow conjunctive adverbs with a comma.

- *Ex. My Rhetoric class is confusing; nevertheless, I find it fascinating.*

Use a semicolon when listing items that already have commas.

- *Ex. If I could do my EWM internship anywhere, I'd choose Osaka, Japan; Los Angeles, California; or anywhere in Europe.*

Even if just one of the items includes a comma, use semicolons.

Semicolons in Journalism

Journalistic writing is concise. It's easier to read short sentences. Really short sentences. I mean short. Therefore, journalists tend to avoid semicolons. Consider these examples:

- *Ex. For an EWM major, strong writing skills are vital; editing skills are crucial, too.*

Correct, but journalists would prefer two separate sentences:

- *Ex. For an EWM major, strong writing skills are vital. Editing skills are crucial, too.*

You can use a semicolon in a headline, but make sure the ideas make sense together.

- *Ex. Coach Suspended in Criminal Investigation; Players Honored*

This semicolon does not make sense, because the two topics are not related. The players would not be honored as a result of their coach's suspension, but the headline makes it seem as though the events are linked.

Semicolons for EWMs

Not all EWMs are journalists, and not all writing has to be journalistic. Sometimes, media writing benefits from a little more style and rhythm. Semicolons can add flow to a sentence in a way that other punctuation can't.

From *The Fault in our Stars* by John Green:

Mom and I were staying on the ground floor in the Kierkegaard; Augustus was on the floor above us, in the Heidegger.

The two independent clauses are connected, making one related sentence. Journalists would punctuate this differently (as seen above), but sometimes a semicolon works best.

From *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald:

A momentary hush; the orchestra leader varies his rhythm obligingly for her and there is a burst of chatter as the erroneous news goes around that she is Gilda Gray's understudy from the "Follies." The party has begun.

If you try replacing the semicolon, it doesn't have the same rhythm:

A momentary hush. The orchestra leader varies his rhythm...

A momentary hush, the orchestra leader varies his rhythm...

A momentary hush—the orchestra leader varies his rhythm...

The semicolon allows a longer pause, paralleling the "momentary hush" described in the text.

2 The Oxford Comma

Definition

You've been taught your whole schooling career that there's always a comma before "and" in a list. That comma, known as the Oxford Comma, can be confusing. Perhaps this chapter will provide a little clarification on how to use it.

The Oxford Comma is used "to avoid ambiguity in the house style of Oxford University Press a comma immediately preceding the conjunction in a list of items."

With the Oxford comma:
we invited the strippers, jfk, and stalin.



Without the Oxford comma:
we invited the strippers, jfk and stalin.

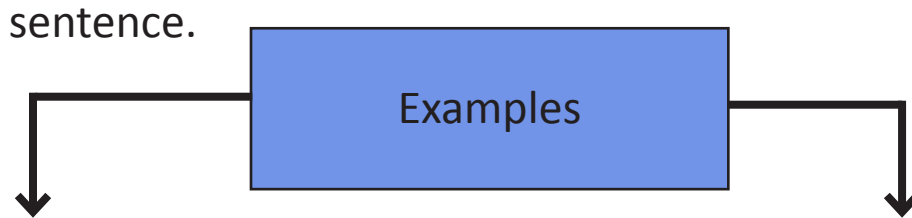


But here's a definition in simpler terms: An optional comma used after the penultimate item in a list of three or more items, before 'and' or 'or'.

This grammatical device, as prestigious as its name, has stirred debate as to the importance it adds to text. Arguments for the Oxford comma suggest that its inclusion reduces confusion and adds clarity. Think of it this way, if you're listing things and two items in the list separated by "and" could be considered one item, use a comma.

However, some publications such as *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Economist*, and *The New York Times* don't use the Oxford Comma in their publications. Arguing that it is unnecessary and creates confusion, these publications refrain from using the comma because confusion can be resolved by simply rephrasing the sentence.

Think of it like this: if it's not necessary, don't do it. The rule of thumb for Oxford Commas in the workplace is to use the Oxford Comma only when needed to reduce confusion. From then on, usage must be consistent throughout the document. Of course, if you're still unsure, just ask.



I went to P.F. Chang's and ate eggrolls, chicken, and dumplings.

An Oxford comma means the difference between eating chicken as well as Chinese dumplings, or eating the Southern comfort food "chicken and dumplings.

I attended a party and had drinks with George Foreman, George Washington and George Clooney.

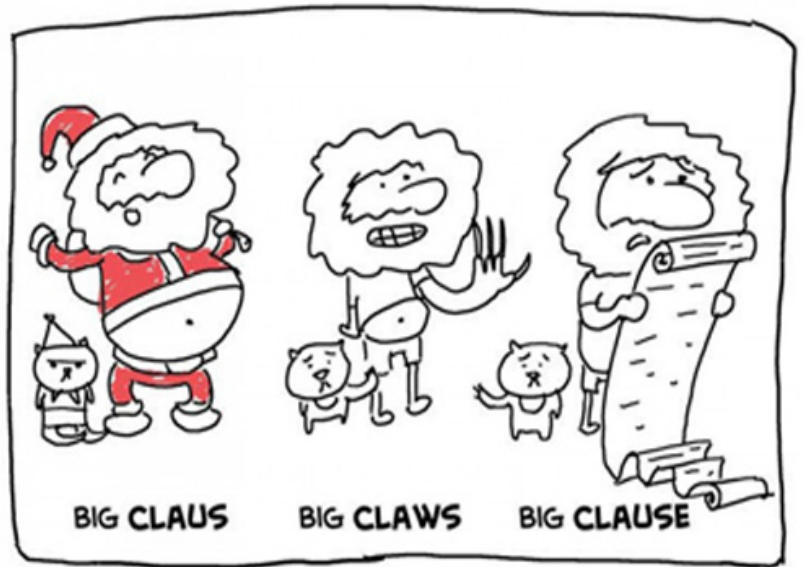
In this case, there is no confusion as to whom you had drinks with. Having a comma here would serve little to no purpose.

3

Homonyms

Definition

A homonym is a word that shares the same pronunciation and sometimes shares the same spelling. It tends to become an issue in grammar because many people misuse terms. It may make sense when read aloud, but in writing it will muddle the meaning that the writer is trying to convey. Homonyms primarily come in pairs of words and phrases, but can sometimes be groups of three or more.



Grammar YUNiversity @The_YUNiversity · Feb 17

"Dessert" = sweet food eaten at the end of a meal.

"Desert" = barren land; to abandon.

Joe *deserted* his family after eating *dessert*.

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Besides basic memorization, not many rules exist to help you remember how to decipher which spelling and pronunciation to use. Our best suggestion is to become familiar with the examples we provide for you here, and to look them up online when you are second-guessing yourself!

Etymology

What in the world is this mumbo-jumbo? Below you will be able to find the origin of the word homonym and the way in which its meaning has been changed throughout history.

Homo- (1) Word-forming element meaning “same, the same, equal, like,” before vowels hom-, from Greek homos “one and the same,” also “belonging to two or more jointly.”



Homonyms are also homographs, which are words that share the same spelling despite their pronunciation, as well as homophones, words that share the same pronunciation regardless of their spelling.



Grammar YUNiversity @The_YUNiversity · Feb 17

“Bear with me” = be patient with me.

“Bare with me” = get naked with me.

Learn this so you don’t get sued for sexual harassment.

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Misuse

Chances are that as English majors, common homonym errors make you cringe. Below are some common mistakes:

Their: belonging to them

There: at that place

They're: they are

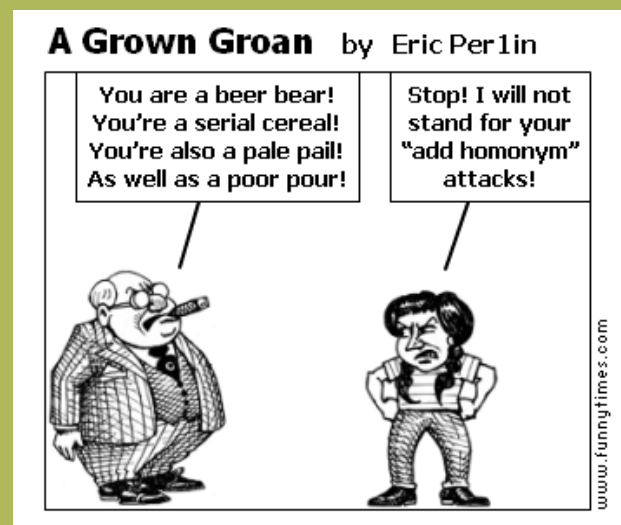
You're: you are

Your: belonging to you

Two: the number

Too: also, very, or more than enough

To: is used in all other cases



These words aren't the only ones being used in the wrong context. Here are some less obvious homonyms that are misused pretty frequently, as well:

Affect: to change

Effect: result

Died: passed away

Dyed: colored

Dual: double

Duel: battle

Complement: enhance; go together

Compliment: praise

Principal: most important

Principle: belief

Altar: an area of religious worship

Alter: to change something

References: <http://www.funnytimes.com/playground/gallery.php?tag=homonym#.UwUdU0JdUft>, <http://blog.vocabnetwork.com/2012/10/12/language-matters-homophone-humor/>, http://www.twitter.com/the_YUNiversity

4 Whose, Who & Whom

Knowing the difference between **who** and **whom**.

Who is used as the subject of a sentence to denote who is doing the action (like he or she) and is used in the subjective case. We use **who** to ask which person does and action.

Whom is used as the object of a verb to denote who has the action done to them (like him or her) and is used in the objective case. It is also used as a preposition. We use **whom** to indicate which person receives an action.

“Who is doing what to whom.” is an easy way to remember which one is the subject and which one is the object in the sentence.

Whose is a pronoun in the possessive case (his, hers, ours) and must be used to indicate possession of an object.

Whom is also used when referring to the object of a verb.

“To whom this may concern?”

“To whom did you give the flowers?”

Use who when referring to the subject of a sentence or a phrase.

“Who brought the cookies?”

“Who did you talk to?”

A trick to knowing which pronoun to use!

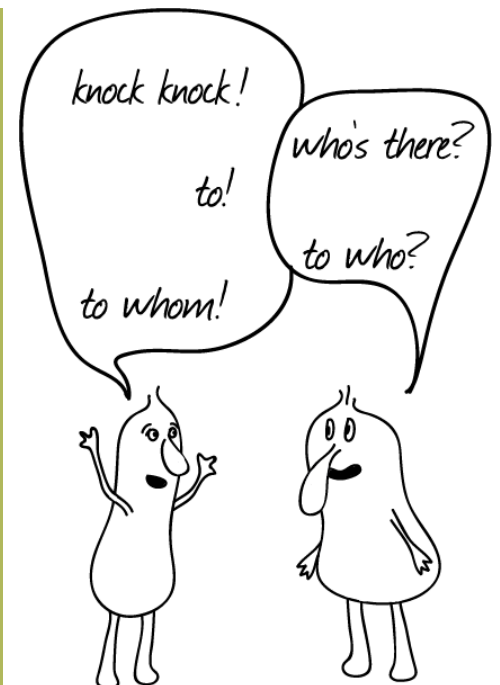
Ask yourself: “Would the answer to the question be he/she or him/her?”

If you can answer the question with him/her, then use **whom**. (An easy way to remember: “him” and “whom” both end in “m”.)

If you can answer the question with he/she, then use **who**.

“To _____ did the card go to?” “The card went to him.” The correct pronoun is **whom**.

“_____ went to the store?” “She went to the store.” The correct pronoun is **who**.



Who, Whom and Whose in Indirect questions.

These types of sentences (almost) always start with phrases such as: “ I don’t know”, “I am not sure”, and “She doesn’t know”. The trick here is to ignore these phrases and focus on the question. Ask yourself: does the indirect question require a subject, object, or possessive form?

Example

“She doesn’t know who the CEO of Apple is.” (subject of indirect question)

“I don’t care who you invite.” (object of indirect question)

“I am not sure whose cat that is.”(shows possession)

Who, Whom and Whose in Adjective Clause..

Adjective clauses are used to describe a noun in the main sentence. Ignore the main sentence and look at the adjective clause when deciding whether to use “who”, “whom” or “whose”

Example

We knew the actor who starred in the movie (subject of adjective clause)

They hired the woman whom they talked to last week (object of adjective clause)

We knew the family whose house we sold. (shows possession)

Practice Exercises

Complete the following sentences with who, whom, or whose:

2. My mother, for _____ I baked a cake, had her birthday party yesterday.

3. My sister, _____ son is two, works at the hospital.

4. My friend, with _____ I live, wants a cat.

5. The people _____ live there have a boat.

10. _____ wrote this essay?

11. _____ are you going to recommend?

12. _____ cup is on the table?

13. It does not look like the right address, _____ did you ask for directions?

15. We have tickets for the play. _____ wants to go with us?

5

Numbers

Introduction

- Figures and Numerals refer to the symbols (Arabic, Roman, Binary etc.) used to signify a number.
- Casual Number: Casual numbers are not numbers with loose morals, they are numbers referenced ambiguously.
 - Ex: “She must be in her eighties by now.”
- Roman Numerals: Numerals from the ancient Roman system have consistently been used in English. You may find them in: written outlines, names, music chords, film titles, and clocks.
 - Ex: Elizabeth the II (the second) or Pope Innocent the VIII (the eighth)

Use of Numerals

You should use cardinal numbers, or numerals, in these instances:

- Addresses: Always use numerals for building numbers in street addresses.
 - Ex: 6 Fifth Ave., 1344 N. Callard St.
- Ages: Always use numerals, even for days or months.
 - Ex: 5 days old, William Effrain, 56.
- Aircraft and spacecraft.
 - Ex: F-17, DC-10, Apollo 12.
- Clothing size.
 - Ex: Size 7
- Dates: Just use the number exclusively, don't include a suffix such as 7th.
 - Ex: April 21
- Decades.
 - Ex: The '80s, the mid 1960s

- Dimensions and heights.
 - Ex: the bathroom is 6 feet by 10 feet; 7 feet tall.
- Distances: for numbers 10 and higher, use numerals.
 - Ex: James ran three miles; The group walked eleven miles.
- Highways.
 - Ex: I-4; I-10; I-75
- Millions and up,
 - Ex: 3 million; 4 billion; 5 trillion
- Money: use numerals exclusively, and incorporate decimals starting at a million.
 - Ex: \$2.9 million
- Percentages: unless you're beginning a sentence, use numerals.
 - Ex: the 1 percent
- Proportions: use numerals exclusively.
 - Ex: 3 parts water to 1 part vinegar
- Ratios: use numerals with accompanying hyphens.
 - Ex: the ratio was 4-1; a 5-3 ratio
- Recipes: use numerals exclusively.
 - Ex: 4 tablespoons
- Speeds.
 - Ex: 77 mph
- Sports: use numerals for almost anything and everything.
 - Ex: they won 4-2,; he scored 3 goals
- Temperatures: unless zero, use numerals; for below zero, write "minus" out.
 - Ex: minus 9
- Times: spell out lengths of time under 10 (min, hrs); use numerals for times.
 - Ex: 5 am; seven minutes; 12 hours; noon; midnight
- Weights: always use numerals.
 - Ex: 6 pounds, 8 ounces
- Years: never include commas; years are the only numerals that you can use at the beginning of a sentence.
 - Ex: 2016 is an election year.

Spelling Numbers Out

You should always spell numbers out as words in these situations:

- The number you're using is a single digit (less than 10), besides the noted exceptions.
 - Ex: There were seven people in class on Monday morning.
- The number is the first word in a sentence and is not a year.
 - Ex: Twenty feels no different than 19.
- The number is casual or a commonly used sum.
 - Ex: He thought the woman was in her thirties.
- The number is a fraction less than one.
 - Ex: The crowd was sparse; about one-fourth of the Swamp was filled.

Using Suffixes With Numbers

You should pair numerals with suffixes such as *nd*, *rd*, *st* and *th* in these cases:

- When using numerals in military sequences.
 - Ex: 1st Sergeant; 82nd Brigade
- When referring to political division or courts.
 - Ex: 1st Congressional District; 200th US Circuit Court
- When using numbered street names (first through ninth are spelled out).
 - Ex: Sixth Avenue; 29th Street
- When referring to a constitutional amendment (again, spell out first through ninth).
 - Ex: Second Amendment; 15th Amendment

More Number Rules

- When you're using a fraction greater than one, write that fraction as a mixed numeral.
 - Ex: He made 1-½ times more money than his brother.
- Use Roman numerals when you refer to a man who is the third or later in his family to bear a name, a king or queen, a pope, and/or a world war.
 - Ex: Willard Carroll "Trey" Smith III, King George VI, Pope John Paul I, World War II

6

Active and Passive Voice

“Learn about voice, you must.” -Yoda

Defining Terms

It is common practice to refer to sentences as either *active-voice* or *passive-voice*, respective to the state of their verbs. The following table breaks down the two types of voice:

Active Voice	Passive Voice
<p>The subject of the sentence is performing the verb.</p> <p>✓ Ex: The dog buried the bone.</p>	<p>The subject of the sentence is being acted upon by someone or something else.</p> <p>✓ Ex: The bone was buried by the dog.</p>
<p>Active-voice sentences may be in the past tense, and passive-voice sentences may be in the present tense.</p>	<p>These sentences contain a form of to be as a helping verb accompanying the passive verb. In the above example, “was” serves as a helping verb for “buried.”</p>
<p>Active voice is the preferred style of writing in most settings. There are some instances, specifically in journalism, where passive voice is necessary. This will be explained later in the chapter.</p>	<p>Passive-voice sentences usually contain a phrase beginning with “by” or “for,” but it may be implied.</p> <p>✓ Ex: The bone was buried.</p>

Identification

There are four main points to keep in mind when you are trying to identify active and passive voice:

- “To be” is used as a helping verb in passive voice.
 - This is usually a two word verb such as “was taken” or “was eaten.”
- The statement is in passive voice only if they verb is being used in the past participle.
 - This is usually “-ed,” except in irregular verbs.
- In order for the sentence to be passive voice, “by” or “for” must be implied or present.
 - This helps with identifying who is performing the action.
- Transitive is the only verb form that has a passive-voice.



Rebecca Johnson
@johnsonr



I finally learned how to teach my guys to ID the passive voice. If you can insert "by zombies" after the verb, you have passive voice.

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Voice Consistency

The following tenses allow for writer’s to keep voice consistent:

- Past Perfect: events that started in the past and continued up until another time in the past.
- Past: events that occurred in the past and are concluded.
- Present Perfect: events started in the past and have continued into the present.
- Present: events happening right now.
- Future Perfect: expressing an idea that something will occur before another action in the future.
- Future: events that will definitely happen in the future.

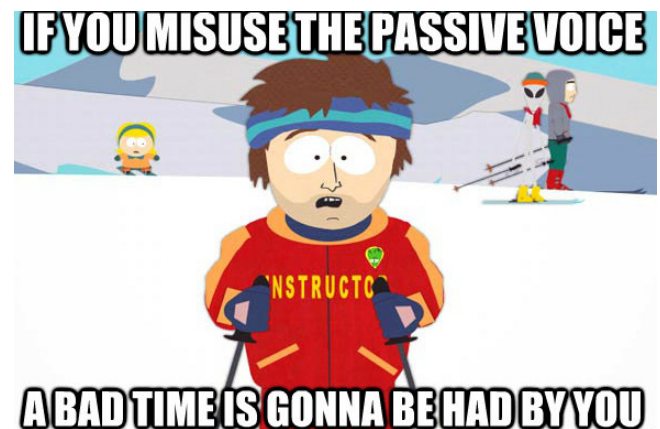
Remember: Do not shift between active and passive in the same sentence.

Tense	Passive-Voice	Active-Voice
Past Perfect	It had been cooked by me.	I had cooked it.
Past	It was cooked by me.	I cooked it.
Present Perfect	It has been cooked by me.	I have cooked it.
Present	It is cooked by me.	I cooked it.
Future	It will have been cooked by me.	I will have cooked it.
Future Perfect	It will be cooked by me.	I will cook it.

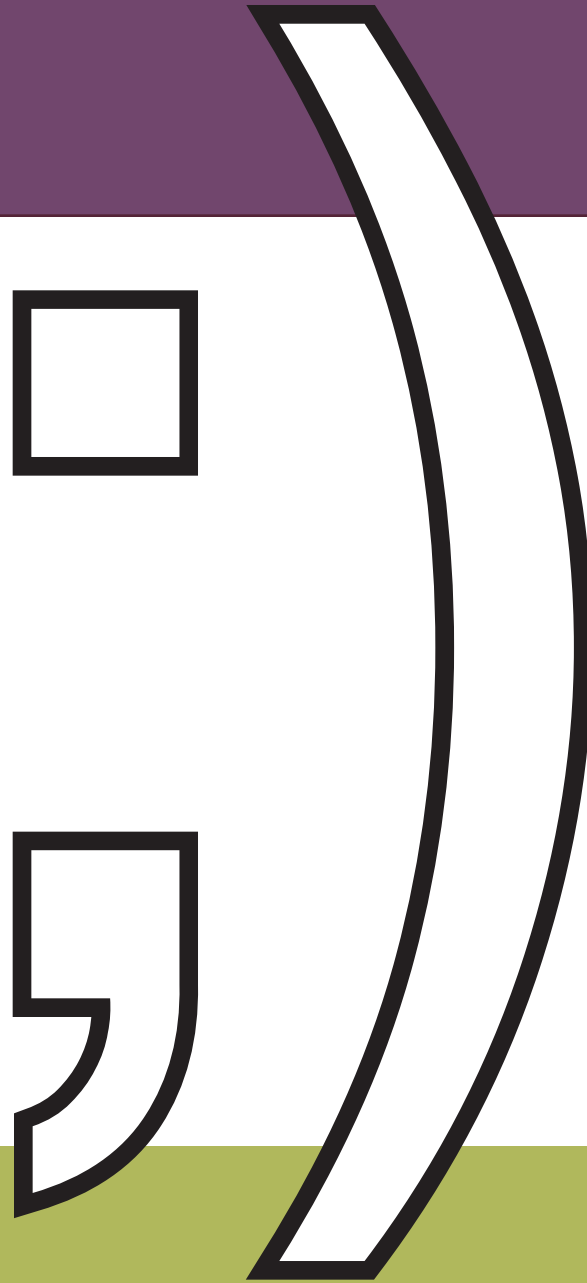
When to Use

The passive voice is appropriate to use in these situations:

- When the person being acted upon is more important than the person acting.
 - ✓ Ex: The supermarket was robbed blind by a local man last Thursday night.
- When the person acting is not known.
 - ✓ Ex: The suspect of the robbery is being investigated by the County police.
- When you wish to keep your sources confidential and anonymous.
 - ✓ Ex: It was reported this man has been planning the heist for some time.
- There are also some instances where a sentence may imply the past participle of the main verb. Keep in mind that this is rare.
 - ✓ Ex: The cookies were made by the teacher.
- Some verbs simply should be used in the passive voice. An example is the word “divorce,” which must always be either in the passive voice or transitive.



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