daughter Lizzie is the murderess. Lizzie is arrested but pleaded not guilty to the crimes. Her sensational trial was followed by people all over the country. The prosecution presented an overwhelming amount of circumstantial evidence. Many people thought that she is guilty. Nonetheless, Lizzie's jury acquitted her. The case remains unsolved to this day.

**EXERCISE 11**

Making Verbs Consistent in Tense

Correct verbs as needed in the following paragraph to achieve consistency in tense. Most verbs will be present tense.

A trip to the dentist should not be a terrible experience—unless one goes to Dr. Litterfloss, credit dentist. Although he graduated magna cum laude from Ed's School of Dentistry, he had a reputation for being one of the dirtiest and most careless dentists in the state. He didn't even know about germs. He never used Novocain. He just spins the chair until his patients lost consciousness. Then he shot them with his x-ray gun from behind a lead wall. Sometimes he missed, and now his dental technician serves the snacks. Sometimes, on Vienna sausages with the other. Stray alley cats and mangy cubs fought around his feet for food scraps, so he didn't need a cleaning service. He seldom washed his Black and Decker drill or Craftsman chisel, and he squirts tobacco juice into his spit sink. I recommended him only with strong reservation.

**Active and Passive Voice**

Which of these sentences sounds better to you?

- Ken Griffey Jr. slammed a home run.
- A home run was slammed by Ken Griffey Jr.

Both sentences carry the same message, but the first expresses it more effectively. The subject (Ken Griffey Jr.) is the actor. The verb (slammed) is the action. The direct object (home run) is the receiver of the action. The second sentence lacks the vitality of the first because the receiver of the action is the subject; the one who performs the action is embedded in the prepositional phrase at the end of the sentence.

The first sentence demonstrates the active voice. It has an active verb (one that leads to the direct object), and the action moves from the beginning to the end of the
sentence. The second sentence exhibits the passive voice (with the action reflecting back on the subject). When given a choice, you should usually select the active voice. It promotes energy and directness.
The passive voice, although not usually the preferred form, does have its uses.

- When the doer of the action is unknown or unimportant:
  
  My car was stolen. [The doer, a thief, is unknown.]

- When the receiver of the action is more important than the doer:
  
  My neighbor was permanently disabled by an irresponsible drunk driver.  
  [The neighbor’s suffering is the focus, not the drunk driver.]

As you can see, the passive construction places the doer at the end of a prepositional phrase (as in the second example) or does not include the doer in the statement at all (as in the first example). In the first example, the receiver of the action (the car) is in the subject position. The verb is preceded by was, a to be helper. Here is another example:

The book was read by her. [passive]

She read the book. [active]

Weak sentences often involve the unnecessary and ineffective use of the passive form; Exercises 12 and 13 give you practice in identifying the passive voice and changing it to active.

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**EXERCISE 12**

**Using Active and Passive Voice**

Identify each sentence as either active voice (A) or passive voice (P). If a sentence with the passive form would be more effective in the active voice, rewrite it.

1. For centuries, pirates have harassed ships on all of the world’s oceans.

2. Piracy has been defined as armed robbery on the high seas.

3. Cargo was seized and coastal towns were plundered by pirates.

   Pirates seized cargo and plundered coastal towns.

4. Also, people were kidnapped and held for ransom by pirates.

   Also, pirates kidnapped people and held them for ransom.

5. Captains of pirate ships often flew a flag with a white skull and crossbones on a black background.

6. The swashbuckling pirate of our imagination was created by writers such as Rafael Sabatini and Lord Byron.

   Writers such as Rafael Sabatini and Lord Byron created the swashbuckling pirate of our imagination.
7. The romantic portrait of a sword-wielding, treasure-hunting ruffian in gold earrings was given to readers by books like *Captain Blood* and poems like "The Corsair."

Books like *Captain Blood* and poems like "The Corsair" gave readers the romantic portrait of a sword-wielding, treasure-hunting ruffian in gold earrings.

8. As a result, pirates have often been perceived by people as ruthless but adventurous heroes.

As a result, people have often perceived pirates as ruthless but adventurous heroes.

9. Actually, though, a drunken, violent, and short life was lived by these desperate criminals.

Actually, though, these desperate criminals lived a drunken, violent, and short life.

10. The decline of piracy was caused by the development of national navies in the nineteenth century.

The development of national navies in the nineteenth century caused the decline of piracy.

**Exercise 13**

**Using Active and Passive Voice**

Identify each sentence as either active voice (A) or passive voice (P). If a sentence with the passive form would be more effective in the active voice, rewrite it.

1. A story was reported by the *Las Vegas SUN* newspaper.

   The *Las Vegas SUN* newspaper reported a story.

2. An accident was experienced by the Flying Elvises during a skydive in Boston.

   The flying Elvises experienced an accident during a skydive in Boston.

3. Elvis Presley, King of Rock 'n' Roll, was impersonated by these high-flying stuntmen.

   These high-flying stuntmen impersonated Elvis Presley, King of Rock 'n' Roll.

4. Fringed white jumpsuits, slicked-back hair, and sunglasses were worn by the four-member skydiving team.

   The four-member skydiving team were fringed white jumpsuits, slicked-back hair, and sunglasses.

5. The toughest part of the act involved keeping their hair in place as they fell.

6. But this time, the four Elvi were blown off course.

7. A miscalculation was made by the jumpers on that windy day.

   The jumpers made a miscalculation on that windy day.

8. Two of the Elvi hit the water in Boston Harbor.
Active and Passive Voice

A verb in the active voice expresses an action done by its subject. A verb in the passive voice expresses an action done to its subject.

**ACTIVE** Principal Ruiz presented the awards.

**PASSIVE** The awards were presented by Principal Ruiz.

**EXERCISE A** Above the underlined verb in each sentence, write A for active voice or P for passive voice.

**Example 1.** Six Nobel prizes are awarded each year.

1. The Nobel Prize fund was established by Alfred Bernhard Nobel. **A**
2. Various institutions function as prize awarders. **A**
3. Winners are named in six categories: physics, chemistry, medicine, literature, peace, and economics. **A**
4. The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences awards the prizes in physics and chemistry. **A**
5. Each award consists of a gold medal, a diploma, and money. **A**
6. The first Nobel prizes were awarded on December 10, 1901. **A**
7. Each year, the new winners give lectures as part of their awards ceremonies. **P**
8. Prizes have been declined by various nominees, usually for political reasons. **A**
9. During World Wars I and II, the prize committees couldn’t gather information on nominees. **A**
10. No Nobel prizes could be awarded during this time. **A**

**EXERCISE B** Underline the verb in each sentence. Above it, write A for active voice or P for passive voice.

**Example 1.** Our calendar has been influenced by the early Roman calendar.

11. The name January comes from the Roman month Januarius. **A**
12. Janus was honored by Romans as the god of doors, gates, and new beginnings. **A**
13. June is derived from the Roman month Junius. **A**
14. Junius was named after Juno, the goddess of marriage. **A**
15. People associate the month of May with the growth of springtime. **A**
16. In Roman mythology, Maia reigned as the goddess of growth. **A**
17. In Latin, decem means “ten.” **A**
18. The tenth month of the Roman calendar was called December. **A**
19. August refers to Emperor Augustus, ruler of Rome from 27 B.C. to A.D. 14. **A**
20. On the 15th of Februarius, a festival of purification was celebrated by Romans. **A**