Active & Passive Verbs

What’s the difference?

Active verbs…
...are direct, concise, and can prevent sentences from becoming too wordy.

Passive verbs...
...are less direct. Passive verbs will always have a form of the verb be. Examples of be verbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>am</th>
<th>was</th>
<th>are</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>is</td>
<td>were</td>
<td>been</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples

Active: Solomon **passed** the math exam.

*This sentence is active because the subject (Solomon) performs the action (passing the math exam).*

Passive: The math exam **was passed** by Solomon.

*The be verb “was” makes this sentence passive because the action (was passed) comes before the subject (Solomon).*

Active: Gloria **sits** on the bench while she **waits** for the bus.

*This sentence is active because the subject (Gloria) performs the actions (sitting and waiting).*

Passive: The bench is being sat on by Gloria while she waits for the bus.

*The be verb phrase “is being sat on” is passive because the action (sitting) comes before the subject (Gloria).*