

ACTIVE VOICE AND SYNONYMS FOR SAID

Passive Voice

The easiest way to spot passive voice is to find all forms of the verb "to be" in your sentences. Notice all of the bolded "to be" verbs in the following paragraph.

*Last summer, my friends and I went on a road trip to Yellowstone. We did the whole loop. We **were** on our way to Old Faithful when we encountered a huge moose-jam. About 500 yards away from us **was** a big moose. It **was** huge and hairy. It **was** probably at least five times bigger than me. All of the tourists **were** out of their cars and had climbed up a pretty steep hill to see the moose. When they **were** tired of looking at the moose, they tried to come back down the steep hill and they **were** falling all over the place! But the funniest one **was** when an old couple who **were** both wearing Velcro shoes came unsteadily down the hill. The wife came down first and she slipped but then caught herself before she fell. Her husband followed. He made it down the hill okay but as soon as he got to the bottom and tried to cross the street he tripped and fell flat on his face. It **was** right in front of our car so we all saw it and burst out laughing. We couldn't help it. Our windows **were** down so I know he heard us. We felt badly about it but it **was** one of the funniest things any of us had seen in our entire lives.*

Active Voice

Note the way the "to be" verbs have been replaced with more active, more descriptive verbs in the next paragraph.

*Last summer, my friends and I went on a road trip to Yellowstone. **On our way to Old Faithful**, we encountered a huge moose-jam. About 500 yards away from us **stood a huge, hairy moose who looked** at least five times bigger than me. All of the tourists **had emerged from** their cars and had climbed up a pretty steep hill to see the moose. When they **had grown** tired of looking at the moose, they tried to come back down the steep hill and they **began** falling all over the place! I tried to control my laughter as **I watched** an old couple **wearing** Velcro shoes come unsteadily down the hill. The wife came down first and she slipped but then caught herself before she fell. Her husband followed. He made it down the hill okay but as soon as he got to the bottom and tried to cross the street he tripped and fell flat on his face. **It happened** right in front of our car so we all saw it and*

*burst out laughing. We couldn't help it. I know he heard us **through the open windows**. We felt badly about it but **I have never seen** anything more funny in my life.*

Synonyms for Said

Using words other than "said" will add description and detail to an otherwise lackluster sentence. Look at the example below, and note how the characterization is improved by replacing "said."

Change: *"I do enjoy a little bourbon now and then," he said.*

To: *"I do enjoy a little bourbon now and then," he _____.* (drawled, noted, giggled, confided)

acknowledged	commented	foretold	ordered	scoffed
acquiesced	complained	fumed	petitioned	scolded
added	confided	giggled	pleaded	screamed
addressed	contradicted	grinned	pled	shouted
admitted	cried	grunted	pointed out	shrieked
admonished	debated	held	prayed	snapped
advised	decided	implied	predicted	sneered
advocated	demurred	indicated	proclaimed	sobbed
affirmed	denied	inferred	professed	solicited
agreed	denounced	instructed	prompted	specified
alleged	described	itemized	propounded	spoke
allowed	dictated	laughed	publicized	sputtered
announced	directed	lectured	quibbled	stammered
answered	disclosed	lied	ranted	stated
approved	disrupted	maintained	reassured	stipulated
argued	divulged	mentioned	reciprocated	stormed
assented	drawled	mimicked	refuted	stressed
asserted	droned	moaned	related	suggested
assumed	elaborated	mumbled	remonstrated	taunted
assured	emphasized	murmured	repeated	thought
asked	enjoined	mused	replied	threatened
attested	entreated	muttered	responded	told

avowed	enunciated	nagged	restated	twitted
babbled	estimated	narrated	resumed	urged
bantered	exclaimed	noted	retorted	uttered
bargained	explained	notified	returned	vowed
began	exposed	objected	reveal	wailed
boasted	expressed	observed	roared	warned
called	faltered	opined	ruled	yelled
claimed	feared	orated	sanctioned	yowled

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