WHAT IS THE PASSIVE VOICE?

Voice refers to the form of the verb. The subject acts when you use the active voice verb form. When you use the passive voice, the person or thing performing the action becomes the object of the sentence. It does not act; it is acted upon by the verb. Look at the following:

A. Patrick was introduced to Sandy by his friend Spongebob.
B. Spongebob introduced his friend Patrick to Sandy.

In Example A (passive), the subject of the sentence (Patrick) does not do the action. Spongebob is the one who does the introducing, so he should be the subject, as he is in Example B (active).

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<th>Passive Construction</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>had what done to it</th>
<th>by whom</th>
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<tr>
<td>Example A</td>
<td>Patrick</td>
<td>was introduced to Sandy</td>
<td>by Spongebob.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Active Construction</td>
<td>Who</td>
<td>did what</td>
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<tr>
<td>Example B</td>
<td>Spongebob</td>
<td>introduced Patrick</td>
<td>to Sandy</td>
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WHY TO AVOID USING PASSIVE VOICE IN YOUR WRITING:

Passive voice saps the verb of its power and can make a sentence awkward and wordy. In all your writing you want to be clear and write with power.

SIGN OF PASSIVE VOICE:

Forms of to be (such as: is, are, was, and were) often indicate the passive voice.

A. All of Mr. Krabs’ food was eaten by Squidward.
B. Squidward ate all of Mr. Krabs’ food.

In sentence A, was signals the passive voice. The subject of the sentence is food, even though the actor is Squidward. In sentence A, the actor is passive and the food gets eaten;
it doesn’t eat. In sentence B, the voice is active because the actor (Squidward) is the person who performs the action (eats). Note that as the sentence changes from passive to active, the stronger verb ate replaces the weak verb was, and the sentence becomes more direct and less wordy.

TO CORRECT THE PASSIVE VOICE:
Find the verb in the sentence so the actor completes the action:

Plankton’s plans were foiled by several characters.

You can rewrite this as:

Several characters foiled Plankton’s plans.

WHEN YOU NEED PASSIVE VOICE:
Sometimes you need to use passive voice. For example, if the recipient of the action is more important than the actor or if the actor is unknown, then use the passive voice:

The script of the first episode of Spongebob Squarepants was stolen from a Nickelodeon office yesterday.