

5th Handout – Transitive/Intransitive, Voice & other Stuff

Transitive and Intransitive verbs

If a verb in the active voice does not need an object to complete its meaning, it is intransitive. Verbs in the active voice that require objects to complete their meaning are transitive. Think of transitive verbs as “transferring” or “transiting” their action to a direct object.

Analyze the following sentences. Mark subjects, phrases, verbs, direct objects, etc. In one grammatical fashion or another, account for each word.

- 1) The price of gold rose pitifully.

- 2) Stock prices may fall.

- 3) Alberta found this worksheet easy.

Above, which verbs are transitive? Which are intransitive?

Below underline the verbs and mark them as transitive or intransitive.

- 4) The acorns have fallen in a great profusion this year.
- 5) Tom, yearning for protein, regularly shucks and eats the acorns.
- 6) It was a brisk autumn day, and the acorns tasted mealy. [*Be careful here.*]
- 7) How can you eat them?

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8) In fact, [if you boil them to remove the tannic acid], acorns make decent flour.

9) How did you know that?

10) I once read a book on it by Euell Gibbons.

Active vs. Passive voice

Voice is the form that determines whether the subject of a verb is acting or is acted upon. When the subject of a verb performs the action, the verb is in the active voice. When the subject of a verb receives the action – when it is acted upon – the verb is in the passive voice.

Below underline the verbs and mark them as active or passive.

11) That guitar was played to death.

12) Who played the guitar?

13) I would like a hotdog.

14) The mustard was taken.

15) She stalked the birdhouse.

16) Suddenly, strange music was heard overhead.

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17) That darn guitar was being played again.

Reverse the voice of sentences 11 - 17 above.