



## Verbs - Voice and Mood

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### Active and Passive voice:

Verbs in the active voice show the subject acting. Verbs in the passive voice show something else acting on the subject. Most writers consider the active voice more forceful and tend to stay away from passives unless they really need them.

**ACTIVE:** Tim **killed** the chicken hawk.

**PASSIVE:** The chicken hawk **was killed** by Tim.

Check out our handout on active and passive verbs at [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/print/grammar/g\\_actpass.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/print/grammar/g_actpass.html).

### Indicative, Imperative, and Subjunctive Mood:

Most verbs we use are in the **indicative mood**, which indicates something:

#### Examples:

- He **was** here.
- I **am** hungry.
- She **will bring** her books.

Some verbs are in the **imperative mood**, which expresses commands or requests. Though it is not stated, the understood subject of imperative sentences is **you**.

#### Examples:

- **Be** here at seven o'clock. (*Understood: **You** be here at seven o'clock.*)
- **Cook** me an omelette. (*Understood: **You** cook me an omelette.*)
- **Bring** your books with you. (*Understood: **You** bring your books with you.*)

When verbs show something contrary to fact, they are in the **subjunctive mood**.

When you express a wish or something that is not actually true, use the past tense or past perfect tense; when using the verb 'to be' in the subjunctive, always use **were** rather than **was**:

#### Examples:

- If he **were** here... (*Implied: ...but he's not.*)
- I wish I **had** something to eat. (*Implied: ...but I don't.*)
- It would be better if you **had brought** your books with you. (*Implied: ...but you haven't brought them.*)

**Review:**

**INDICATIVE:** I **need** some help.

**IMPERATIVE:** **Help** me!

**SUBJUNCTIVE:** If I **were** smart, I'd call for help.

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This page is located at  
[http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/print/grammar/g\\_vmood.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/print/grammar/g_vmood.html).

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