

## Lesson 3: Unrest and War

### ☐ Getting Started

In your reading for this lesson, you'll learn more about the early career of John Adams, Abigail's role as a mother, and the growing unrest in the colonies that would soon lead to revolution. You'll also have the opportunity to work with verbs in creative ways, focusing on active and passive voice.

### Stuff You Need

- *Abigail Adams: Witness to a Revolution* by Natalie S. Bober
- *Handy Guide to Writing* by Beyond the Page

### Ideas to Think About

- How do the lives of individuals interact with, influence, and become transformed by the events of the time and place in which they live?
- How can the use of different verbs and verb forms influence the power and clarity of one's writing?

### Things to Know

- In a sentence written in **active voice**, the subject of the sentence is performing the action described by the verb.
- In a sentence written in **passive voice**, the action of the verb happens to the subject of the sentence, but the subject of the sentence does not perform the action.

### ☐ Reading and Questions

Read Chapters 5 and 6 of *Abigail Adams: Witness to a Revolution* by Natalie S. Bober and then answer these questions.

1. How did James Fordyce think that children were like plants?

---

---

2. What were the Townsend Acts and how did colonists react to them?

---

---

---

3. How did the British government respond to the Boston Tea Party?

---

---

4. Why do you think Abigail Adams and Mercy Otis Warren were such good friends?

---

---

---

### Activities

#### ☐ Activity 1: Active and Passive Voice

You already know that every sentence has a subject and a verb, and you're familiar with different kinds of sentence structures. One important distinction is between sentences written in **active voice** and those written in **passive voice**.

In a sentence written in **active voice**, the subject of the sentence is performing the action described by the verb. For example:

- *The mad scientist built a terrifying robot. (the scientist is performing the action of building)*
- *British soldiers occupied the city of Boston. (the soldiers are performing the action of occupying)*

In a sentence written in **passive voice**, the action of the verb happens to the subject of the sentence, but the subject of the sentence does not perform the action. For example:

- *A terrifying robot was built by the mad scientist. (the robot is not building; the building happens to the robot)*
- *The city of Boston was occupied by British soldiers. (the city is not occupying; the occupying happens to the city)*

Passive voice verbs also have this specific construction:

- form of the verb "to be" + the past participle form of another verb

The past participle of most verbs ends in "-ed" (walked, predicted), although some irregular verbs end in "-n" (thrown, drawn), "-en" (eaten, taken), or something without a specific pattern (bought, told, left).

The phrase "by \_\_\_\_" follows some passive voice verbs. This phrase tells you who or what performed the action of the verb. *A terrifying robot was built by the mad scientist.* If you suspect a sentence may be in passive voice but there is no "by \_\_\_\_" phrase, you can test it by adding one yourself and seeing if it works. For example: "The party was attended." + "by monkeys" = "The party was attended by monkeys."

You usually want to avoid passive voice in your writing because it is often less clear, less direct, and less strong than active voice. Passive voice is useful in some situations, however, such when you want to emphasize the object of the action and not the person or thing doing the action or when the person or thing performing an action is unknown or unimportant. For example:

- *Graffiti was sprayed on the new building.*
- *Four thousand dollars will need to be raised to repair the damage.*

In most cases, though, active voice is a stronger and more specific choice. Here is an example:

- *Mistakes were made.*

First, we can confirm that it is a passive voice construction because it has a form of the verb "to be" ("were") + the past participle of the verb "make" (which is "made"). There is no "by \_\_\_\_" phrase, but we can also apply the monkey test. "Mistakes were made." + "by monkeys" = "Mistakes were made by monkeys."

Next, it is a weak construction because it doesn't tell who made the mistakes why the mistakes were important. Here are some active voice versions:

- *The cavalry commander made mistakes that guaranteed a defeat.*
- *The president of the multinational corporation made mistakes that cost the stockholders billions.*
- *Fluffy little bunnies made mistakes that allowed the farmer to spot them in the garden.*

Be sure that you are aware of the differences between passive and active voice and that you use these two voices thoughtfully to convey your meaning. Ask your parent which option to complete for this activity. After your answers have been checked (and corrected as needed), be sure to save this page; reviewing the page may be helpful when you are studying for the unit test.

### Option 1

Complete the "Active or Passive?" (Option 1) page. NOTE: For more information about verb voice, see p. 15 in the *Handy Guide to Writing*.

### Option 2

Complete the "Active or Passive?" (Option 2) activity page. NOTE: For more information about verb voice, see p. 15 in the *Handy Guide to Writing*.

HINT: If you're not sure if a clause is in active or passive voice, circle the subject and put a box around the verb or verb phrase. Then determine whether the subject is performing the action of the verb.

For Part II, your child had to choose 2 passive-voice clauses and explain why the author used the passive voice. Answers will vary but should make sense. He could also argue that active voice would have worked better.

1. It would be awkward to express the thought in active voice (it would have to be something like "His agreeing would tarnish his reputation...")
2. It isn't important (or perhaps even known) who is asking John to play a more active role.

3. This sentence would work just as well in active voice. The author may have used passive to keep the focus on John.
4. The wording here works well. It would take more words and wouldn't sound quite as good to identify what is doing the brewing: "The water of the bay brewed salty tea for the fish."

### ☐ **Activity 2: The Boston Massacre and the Boston Tea Party**

In today's reading, you learned about the Boston Massacre and the Boston Tea Party, two pivotal events leading up to the American Revolution. In this activity you'll have the opportunity to consider those events as a historian might.

Historians often look at primary sources to help them understand what happened in the past. Those sources are often in written form (diaries, letters, newspapers, government documents, etc.), but they can also include visual arts, music, material objects, or other resources created at the time that the historical events took place.

You'll explore primary sources of various kinds in this activity and then write a first-person account based on your research. Choose the option that appeals to you and complete it.

#### Option 1: The Boston Massacre

One of the most famous sources about the Boston Massacre is an engraving made by Paul Revere entitled "The blood massacre perpetrated in King Street Boston on March 5th 1770 by a party of the 29th Regt." You'll explore this work of art and then write a paragraph about what you see in the engraving and what it tells you about the Boston Massacre.



#### **Library of Congress**

[www.beyondthepage.com/link/1684/](http://www.beyondthepage.com/link/1684/)

First, visit this link to the Library of Congress page for this engraving and click on the images to see larger versions.

Look at the details in the image and think about what the artist might have been trying to say about this event. Then write a well-formed paragraph in which you state your argument about what the artist might have thought about these events — support that argument with 2-3 specific examples. Be sure that your paragraph ends with a concluding idea that summarizes your main point and/or moves it forward in some way. Be sure to use primarily active voice sentences.

For example, instead of "The British soldiers were drawn with stern looks on their faces." you might say, "The artist gave the British soldiers stern looks."

### Option 2: The Boston Tea Party

In this option, you'll read an entry from the diary of John Adams about the Boston Tea Party and then, using his account and the account in today's reading from *Abigail Adams: Witness to a Revolution* as sources, you'll compose a short paragraph describing the events as if you had been there.



#### **The Diary of John Adams**

[www.beyondthepage.com/link/3900/](http://www.beyondthepage.com/link/3900/)

First, visit the diary of John Adams and read the entry about the Boston Tea Party, dated December 17, 1773.

Write a short paragraph describing the events of the Boston Tea Party from the point of view of either a participant or a witness. You may, if you'd like, imagine that you are writing about the Boston Tea Party in a letter to a friend or in a diary. In your paragraph, be sure to use active voice whenever you can and be descriptive in your account.

### **Wrapping Up**

As discontent turned to war, the responsibilities that fell to Abigail Adams grew ever greater. In John's absence, she handled household responsibilities that usually would have fallen to her husband. In the next chapters, you'll learn more about John's work in the Continental Congress and about Abigail's life back home.

# Active or Passive

## Part I



Instructions: Each independent clause in the following paragraph is numbered. For each clause, fill in the numbered blanks below the paragraph to determine whether the clause is in active or passive voice.

### Example:

Crimes were committed frequently in Boston.

Subject of clause: **crimes**      Verb/verb phrase: **were committed**

Is the subject performing the action of the verb? **No** The clause is in **passive** voice.

(1) Abigail moved to Boston, a place very different from rural Braintree. (2) In Boston, wagons on bumpy streets produced quite a racket. (3) In quiet Braintree, hardly a sound could be heard most days. (4) In the city, loud drills were performed during the day by British troops, (5) and men shouted the time every hour, even at night. (6) In Boston, soot and smoke were produced by the chimneys of homes and businesses, (7) and the streets were crowded by horses and other animals.

1. Subject of clause: \_\_\_\_\_ Verb/verb phrase: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the subject performing the action of the verb? \_\_\_\_\_ The clause is in \_\_\_\_\_ voice.

2. Subject of clause: \_\_\_\_\_ Verb/verb phrase: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the subject performing the action of the verb? \_\_\_\_\_ The clause is in \_\_\_\_\_ voice.

3. Subject of clause: \_\_\_\_\_ Verb/verb phrase: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the subject performing the action of the verb? \_\_\_\_\_ The clause is in \_\_\_\_\_ voice.

4. Subject of clause: \_\_\_\_\_ Verb/verb phrase: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the subject performing the action of the verb? \_\_\_\_\_ The clause is in \_\_\_\_\_ voice.

# Active or Passive

5. Subject of clause: \_\_\_\_\_ Verb/verb phrase: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the subject performing the action of the verb? \_\_\_\_\_ The clause is in \_\_\_\_\_ voice.

6. Subject of clause: \_\_\_\_\_ Verb/verb phrase: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the subject performing the action of the verb? \_\_\_\_\_ The clause is in \_\_\_\_\_ voice.

7. Subject of clause: \_\_\_\_\_ Verb/verb phrase: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the subject performing the action of the verb? \_\_\_\_\_ The clause is in \_\_\_\_\_ voice.

## Part 2

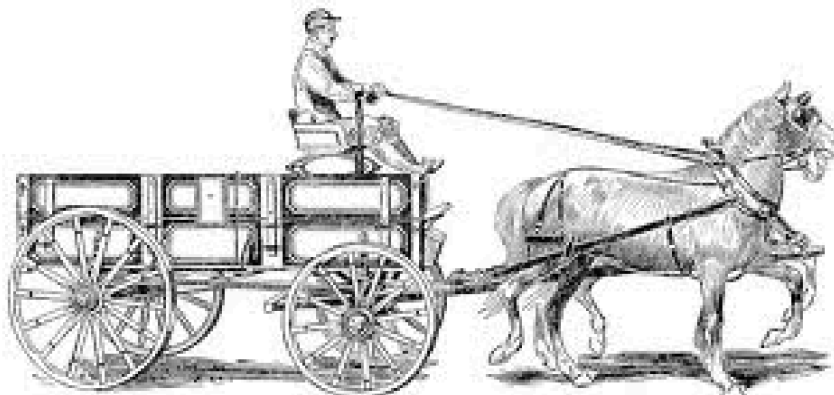
Directions: Pick two of the passive voice clauses from above (or from Page 1) and rewrite them in active voice.

Clause # \_\_\_\_\_ Active voice version: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Clause # \_\_\_\_\_ Active voice Version: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Active or Passive

## Part I

Instructions: Each independent clause in the following paragraph is numbered. In the blanks below the paragraph, tell whether each clause is in active or passive voice. If the clause is in passive voice, rewrite it in active voice.



**Example:** John was inoculated against smallpox.

Voice: passive

Rewrite: Doctors inoculated John against smallpox.

(1) Abigail moved to Boston, a place very different from rural Braintree. (2) In Boston, wagons on bumpy streets produced quite a racket. (3) In quiet Braintree, hardly a sound could be heard most days. (4) In the city, loud drills were performed during the day by British troops, (5) and men shouted the time every hour, even at night. (6) In Boston, soot and smoke were produced by the chimneys of homes and businesses, (7) and horses and other animals crowded the streets.

1. Voice \_\_\_\_\_

If passive, rewrite the clause: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Voice \_\_\_\_\_

If passive, rewrite the clause: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Voice \_\_\_\_\_

If passive, rewrite the clause: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Voice \_\_\_\_\_

If passive, rewrite the clause: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Active or Passive

5. Voice \_\_\_\_\_

If passive, rewrite the clause: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Voice \_\_\_\_\_

If passive, rewrite the clause: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Voice \_\_\_\_\_

If passive, rewrite the clause: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Part 2

Directions: The passages on page 3 are from today's reading. Each passage has a passive-voice sentence or sentence part that is in bold. Choose two and explain why you think the author used the passive voice. If you think the active voice would have been more effective, explain why.

Explanation for # \_\_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Explanation for # \_\_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Active or Passive

## Reading #1

Would Mr. Adams defend the captain and the other British soldiers? No other lawyer would take their case.

John knew full well the risk involved if he agreed. **His reputation as a leading patriot would be tarnished**, and he himself might become the target of an angry mob. But John was a strange revolutionary.

## Reading #2

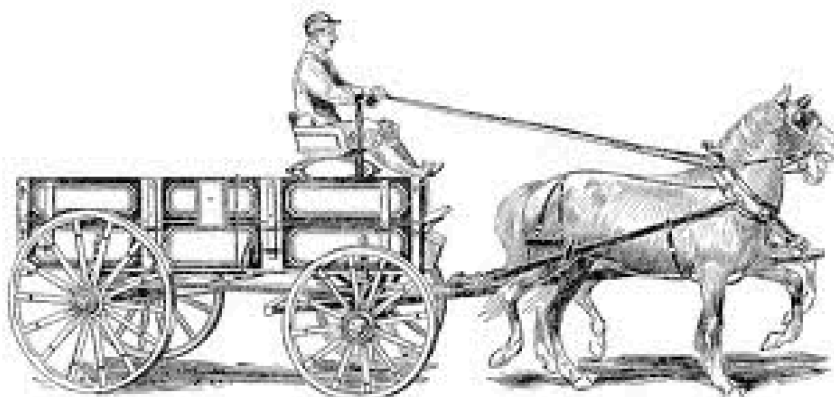
In June the Boston Town Meeting elected John a representative to the Massachusetts legislature. **He was being asked now to play a more active role in politics.** He was aware of the importance of the trust being placed in him, but concerned about his ability to fulfill that trust.

## Reading #3

This could signify his financial ruin— as well as the loss of his life. **He could be tried by the British for treason.** But his Puritan sense of duty compelled him to accept.

## Reading #4

Then they proceeded to dump 342 chests of tea into the water. The silent crowd watched approvingly as **salty tea was brewed for the fish.**



## Lesson 3: Unrest and War

### Getting Started

#### ? Ideas to Think About

- How do the lives of individuals interact with, influence, and become transformed by the events of the time and place in which they live?
- How can the use of different verbs and verb forms influence the power and clarity of one's writing?



#### Things to Know

- In a sentence written in **active voice**, the subject of the sentence is performing the action described by the verb.
- In a sentence written in **passive voice**, the action of the verb happens to the subject of the sentence, but the subject of the sentence does not perform the action.

#### • Skills

- Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects (e.g., emphasizing the actor or the action; expressing uncertainty or describing a state contrary to fact). (LA)
- Use subject-verb agreement and verb tense that are appropriate for the meaning of the sentence. (LA)

### Introducing the Lesson

In this lesson, your child will learn more about the early parenting activities of John and Abigail Adams as John's career moved forward and the colonies moved toward revolution. Your child will focus on verbs in this lesson, exploring active and passive voice.

### Reading and Questions

1. How did James Fordyce think that children were like plants?

*In his view, children needed to be cultivated like plants and would thrive or fail depending upon the care given to them.*

2. What were the Townsend Acts and how did colonists react to them?

*The Townsend Acts imposed a tax on goods coming from England including "lead, glass, paper, paints, and tea" (p. 36) without the consent of colonists. Many colonists responded to these taxes by boycotting all English goods.*

3. How did the British government respond to the Boston Tea Party?

*The British government closed Boston Harbor to trade, sent in a military governor, and sent troops to be stationed in Boston.*

4. Why do you think Abigail Adams and Mercy Otis Warren were such good friends?

*Answers will vary, but your child may mention their shared ideas about women's roles, their similar interests and daily concerns (childrearing, politics, their husbands' careers, fashion), or the connection they may each have felt to another highly intelligent woman.*

**Activities****Activity 1: Active and Passive Voice**

In this activity your child will learn about active and passive voice. There are two options for this activity. If your child needs some guidance to recognize the passive voice, Option 1 may be more appropriate. If he has a firmer understanding of the concept, Option 2 will be more challenging for him.

Option 1Answer Key (Option 1).

1. Subject of clause: Abigail | Verb/verb phrase: moved / yes The clause is in active voice.
2. Subject of clause: wagons | Verb/verb phrase: produced / yes The clause is in active voice.
3. Subject of clause: sounds | Verb/verb phrase: could be heard / no The clause is in passive voice.
4. Subject of clause: drills | Verb/verb phrase: were performed / no The clause is in passive voice.
5. Subject of clause: men | Verb/verb phrase: shouted / yes The clause is in active voice.
6. Subject of clause: soot and smoke | Verb/verb phrase: were produced / no The clause is in passive voice.
7. Subject of clause: streets | Verb/verb phrase: were crowded / no The clause is in passive voice.

Your child had to rewrite 2 of the passive-voice clauses (from 3, 4, 6, and 7) in active voice. His answers should be similar to the following:

- #3. In quiet Braintree, Abigail could hardly hear a sound most days.
- #4. In the city, British troops performed loud drills during the day.
- #6. In Boston, the chimneys of homes and businesses produced soot and smoke.
- #7. and horses and other animals crowded the streets.

Option 2Answer Key (Option 2).

Your child had to identify each sentence as active or passive voice and rewrite the passive-voice clauses in active voice. His answers should be similar to the following:

1. active voice
2. active voice
3. passive voice — In quiet Braintree, Abigail could hardly hear a sound most days.
4. passive voice — In the city, British troops performed loud drills during the day.
5. active voice
6. passive voice — In Boston, the chimneys of homes and businesses produced soot and smoke.
7. active voice

**Activity 2: The Boston Massacre and the Boston Tea Party**

In this activity, your child will explore primary sources related to the Boston Massacre or the Boston Tea Party and write a first-person account based on his research. Option 1 goes into greater detail about active and passive voice, inviting students to find ways around using passive voice when describing art. Option 2 is a bit more straightforward, inviting students to write a first-person account (using active voice) from the perspective of an eyewitness to history. Your child may choose whichever option is most appealing.

Option 1: The Boston Massacre

In this option, your child will view an engraving by Paul Revere about the Boston Massacre and write a paragraph about what he thinks the artist might have thought about the events depicted in the image. His paragraph should be well-organized and should, wherever possible, rely on active voice instead of passive voice.

Option 2: The Boston Tea Party

In this option, your child will read from an excerpt from the diary of John Adams and write a first person account of the Boston Tea Party based on the Adams diary entry and his reading in *Abigail Adams: Witness to a Revolution*. His paragraph should be well-organized, descriptive, and written primarily in active voice.

**Wrapping Up****Questions to Discuss**

- Do you think the author does a good job of balancing the personal life and inner thoughts of Abigail Adams with the events of the Revolution unfolding around her? Do you wish the author had shifted the balance either more toward Abigail's personal world or toward her historical context?
- What is the difference between active voice and passive voice? (Your child should understand that in active voice, the subject is completing the action described by the verb and in passive voice, the subject is being acted upon.)
- What challenges did Abigail Adams face while John was away? How well did she handle those challenges? (Abigail Adams needed to manage not only her usual domestic responsibilities -- housekeeping, childcare, etc. -- but also the farm and John's business. She had to attend to the budget and make decisions that would normally be made by John or together with him. She managed everything very competently.)

**Things to Review**

- Review your child's responses to the questions about today's readings.
- Review your child's active and passive voice activity page.
- Review your child's paragraph about the Boston Massacre engraving or about the Boston Tea Party.