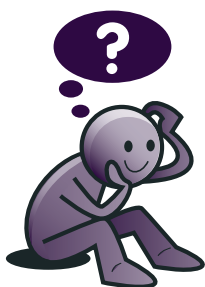


Section 9.2

Understanding passive sentences

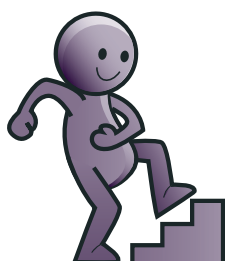


Why is this important?

Understanding more complex sentences enables children to process more complex instructions and prepares them for using sophisticated structures which convey subtle differences in meaning. The passive voice is often quite challenging in terms of children's grammatical development because they cannot rely on word order.

What to do

- Gather together some toys and everyday objects, e.g.
 - ★ Two favourite dolls such as Batman, Barbie, Bob the Builder.
 - ★ Cup, play food, sponge, brush, car, ball.
- Ask the child to listen to the instruction and then do the action, e.g.
 - ★ 'Batman is fed a banana by Spiderman.'
 - ★ 'The car is washed by Bob the Builder.'
 - ★ 'Barbie's hair is brushed by Dora.'



Step up

- Make sure the child has a choice of toys/objects from which he/she has to choose the ones to follow the instructions.
- Add in additional adjectives to increase the processing load (e.g. 'The *blue* ball is thrown by the *tall* girl').

Step down

- *You* use the toys to demonstrate as you give the instructions, then repeat the *same* instruction for the child.
- You choose the toys so the selection is already made (e.g. for 'Batman is fed a banana by Spiderman', give the child Batman, banana and Spiderman).
- When sharing books, or out-and-about, comment on what is happening using passive sentences (e.g. 'Oh look, the ball is thrown by the girl', 'The go-kart is driven by the boy').
- Slow down your rate of delivery when saying the sentence.

