

The Invalid's Story

by Mark Twain

In addition to this review, you may want to read the enotes study guide on the handouts and worksheets page

Vocabulary

term:

prodigious

judicious

deleterious

placidly

synonym:

huge

sensible

harmful

peacefully

antonym:

tiny

unreasonable

beneficial

excitably

Grammar: Active and Passive Voice

A verb in the **active voice** expresses an action done **by** its subject.

A verb in the **passive voice** expresses an action done **to** its subject.

The “voice” of a verb tells whether the subject *performs* an action (active voice) or *receives* an action (passive voice).

Grammar: Active and Passive Voice

Active Voice	Passive Voice
<p>Bambara and Twain have written stories about memorable conflicts. (The subjects, <i>Bambara</i> and <i>Twain</i>, perform the action of the verb, <i>have written</i>.)</p>	<p>Stories about memorable conflicts have been written by Bambara and Twain. (The subject, <i>stories</i>, receives the action of the verb, <i>have been written</i>.)</p>

Grammar: Active and Passive Voice

Use active verb tenses—and active voice—for lively, direct writing. Use passive verb tenses—and passive voice—to de-emphasize the performer of the action or when the performer is unknown.

Grammar: Active and Passive Voice

Practice A Read each sentence and identify its verb or verb phrase. Identify each verb's or verb phrase's voice and tense as *active* or *passive*.

1. The story about the man on the bridge was told to send a message.
2. She watches them in angry silence.
3. Granddaddy Cain greets Camera and Smilin.
4. The film was pulled out from the camera.

Grammar: Active and Passive Voice

Practice A Read each sentence and identify its verb or verb phrase. Identify each verb's or verb phrase's voice and tense as *active* or *passive*.

1. The story about the man on the bridge **was told** to send a message. (P)
2. She **watches** them in angry silence. (A)
3. Granddaddy Cain **greet**s Camera and Smilin. (A)
4. The film **was pulled** out from the camera. (P)

Grammar: Active and Passive Voice

Practice B Rewrite the following sentences using active voice and tenses. You may need to add words to indicate who performed the action.

1. The cheese **had been placed** on the box.
2. “The Invalid’s story **was written** by Mark Twain.
3. The coffin **was sent** to Wisconsin by train.
4. A foul odor **was detected** by the narrator.

Grammar: Active and Passive Voice

Practice B Rewrite the following sentences using active voice and tenses. You may need to add words to indicate who performed the action.

1. The man **placed** the cheese on the box.
2. Mark Twain **wrote** “The Invalid’s Story.”
3. The narrator **sent** the coffin to Wisconsin by train.
4. The narrator **detected** a foul odor.

Grammar: Active and Passive Voice

- Which sentence is in the active voice?
 - The white pine box was put onto the train.
 - A lot of chicken feathers were brought by Thompson.
 - The window was broken.
 - I've got an idea.

Grammar: Active and Passive Voice

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 - The white pine box was put onto the train.
 - A lot of chicken feathers were brought by Thompson.
 - The window was broken.
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Grammar: Active and Passive Voice

- Which sentence is in the passive voice?
 - We were taken from the platform.
 - It was only a harmless box of rifles.
 - John B. Hackett is dead.
 - Thompson bought dried apples.

Grammar: Active and Passive Voice

- Which sentence is in the passive voice?
 - We were taken from the platform.
 - It was only a harmless box of rifles.
 - John B. Hackett is dead.
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Literary Analysis: Dialogue and Dialect

Dialogue is a conversation between or among characters in a literary work. In prose, dialogue is usually set off by quotation marks, and a new paragraph indicates a change in speaker. Authors use dialogue for these purposes:

- to develop complex yet believable characters
- to reveal character traits and relationships
- to advance the action of the plot and develop the conflict
- to add variety, color, and realism to narratives

To make characters and settings vivid, authors may write dialogue reflecting characters' dialect. **Dialect** is a way of speaking that is common to people of a region or group. The words, pronunciations, and grammar of a dialect differ from those of the standard form of a language.

Reading Skill: Cause and Effect

A **plot** is a series of causes and effects. A **cause** is an event, an action, or a feeling that produces a result. An **effect** is the result produced. To **monitor your comprehension** while reading, reflect on your understanding and visualize the action to analyze cause and effect.

- Use text details to picture the setting, characters, and action.
- Use the details of your mental picture to help you **make connections** between actions and events.

Critical Reading

- Who is the invalid referred to in the story's title, "The Invalid's Story"?
- The narrator is the invalid referred to in the title.

Critical Reading

- The plot of "The Invalid's Story" centers on confusion about
- The confusion centers on what is in the long white-pine box.

Critical Reading

- What is the setting for "The Invalid's Story"?
- The setting is a train from Cleveland to Wisconsin.

Critical Reading

- What literary element does this passage from "The Invalid's Story" illustrate? "Pfew! I reckon it ain't no cinnamon't I've loaded up thish-year stove with!"
 - dialect
 - or
 - simile
 - dialect

Critical Reading

- In "The Invalid's Story," which word best describes how the narrator feels when he begins to smell the foul odor in the railroad car?
 - embarrassed
 - or
 - angry

 - embarrassed

Critical Reading

- In "The Invalid's Story," when does Mark Twain use dialect in the narrator's comments or in those by Thompson?
 - in Thompson's

Critical Reading

- Thompson gives a long speech about the fact that death is inevitable for all human beings.
- Why do you think Twain includes this long speech?
 - Because it shows that Thompson is a brilliant philosopher
 - or
 - because it adds humor to the story
 - it adds humor

Critical Reading

- Read the following idiom from the story: "Well-a-well, we've all got to go, they ain't no getting around it." Which best expresses the meaning of the underlined words?
 - There are ways to avoid it,
or
 - there is no way to avoid it.
 - There is no way to avoid it.

Critical Reading

- The narrator of "The Invalid's Story" says that "the news was too late to save me; imagination had done its work, and my health was permanently shattered."
 - According to the narrator, what has caused the permanent breakdown in his health imagination or overwork?
 - imagination

Critical Reading

- In "The Invalid's Story," why do the two men light up cigars to "modify" the unpleasant odor in the express car, or to keep warm?
 - The men want to "modify" the unpleasant odor in the express car.

Essay

You will not write your essays until Friday

- Start Thinking about these prompts:
 - In an essay, describe how Twain uses images of smell in "The Invalid's Story" to create the story's humor. Mention one specific example from the story.
 - Dialect is a way of speaking that is common to people of a particular region or group. In an essay, discuss Mark Twain's use of dialect in "The Invalid's Story." Where, specifically, does Twain use dialect in the story? How does dialect add to the story's vivid setting and its humor?