



ACTIVE VS. PASSIVE VOICE

It's important your writing is clear and concise. Using more words may sound flowery, but it lessens the impact. To make sure your writing is the best it can be, use the active voice.

What is active voice?

Active voice is when the subject of the sentence performs the verb's action. A sentence that uses active voice is strong and direct. It gets to the point.

Examples:

The dog chased the squirrel.

The general led the troops into battle.

The court declared the group's actions illegal.

What is passive voice?

Passive voice is when the subject of the sentence is acted on by the verb. These sentences can be more complicated than necessary.

Examples:

The squirrel was chased by the dog.

The troops were led into battle by the general.

The group's actions were declared illegal by the court.

Notice how much simpler the active voice sentences are than the passive?

Each active sentence above uses fewer words than its corresponding passive sentence. Using active voice not only delivers a clearer message but also cuts down on word count, leaving you space to write more of what's important.

Try your hand at active vs. passive voice.

Each sentence below is written in passive voice. Rewrite each sentence in active voice and simplify where you can.

The document was read by President Kennedy prior to making a decision.

Susan B. Anthony was approached by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, asking if she needed help.

The horses were ridden by the rangers for four days straight.
