



HOW TO USE THE ACTIVE VOICE: BUILDING STRONG, CONFIDENT WRITING

Putting my thoughts into words for others to read used to be a scary process for me. It was scary because I lacked confidence in my writing. I needed to figure out a way to strengthen my writing and build my confidence, but how?

An editor pointed out that simply by writing in active voice versus passive voice, my words would automatically become stronger, more direct, and have more energy – **keeping my reader a reader.**

So writing in active voice would be an easy way to improve my writing, but what IS an active voice and how does it differ from passive?

Writing in the active voice means crafting sentences where the subject is doing the action. For example:

Mike drives a truck.

You make me crazy.

Brianna cuts my hair.

In each of these sentences, the subjects (Mike, You and Brianna) perform the action of the verb (drives, make, cuts).

In passive voice, the target of the action is moved to the subject position. Let's take the first sentence from above for an example. In passive voice, the sentence might read:

The truck is driven by Mike.

Keep in mind that passive voice may not be grammatically incorrect, but it tends to be more difficult for the reader to understand your message – which is the main reason you write.

Here's [a site that talks about active and passive voice](#). It also has some great active writing tips and a fun active writing test, where you can practice writing in active voice.

I hope this helps and leads to strong, confident writing.



By Cammi Clark
Graduate Assistant, Virtual Writing Center
Antioch University