

Verbs, Active and Passive

- Every sentence has a verb.
- Verb choice is important and can strongly affect a reader's understanding and motivation to keep reading.
- Powerful, strong, and vivid verbs "show," rather than just "tell," what's happening. They help us to visualize, or see the scene in our minds.
- Verbs of being indicate the state (or condition) of something.
- Verbs of being include *am, is, are, was, were, be, being, and been*.
- A verb phrase is often made up of a verb of being used as a helping verb with a main verb.
- Avoid overusing verbs of being and *-ing* verb phrases.
- Use verb forms that can stand alone to make your writing more powerful—to show, rather than tell, what is happening.
- The way we write a sentence is just as important as what we write.
- Sentences can be written in either active or passive voice.
- The active voice indicates that the subject does (or performs) the action of the verb.
- The passive voice indicates that the subject receives the action (or is acted upon by the verb). It usually includes a helping verb of being with the past participle form of a verb. It may include a *by* phrase telling who or what does or performs the action of the verb.
- Sentences are usually more powerful when written in active rather than passive voice. Active voice helps readers better understand and visualize what's happening.
- Passive voice can be effective when you want to emphasize the receiver of the verb's action rather than who or what performs the action.