THE ART OF
Activating Passive Voice

Active voice uses fewer words and emphasizes who performs the action. Activate sentences to enhance cohesivity and concision.

WHY USE ACTIVE VOICE?

Most professors prefer active voice, and overall, it clarifies and improves writing.

- **Active voice** directly and concisely clarifies phrasing which helps promote coherence in writing.
- It helps avoid unnecessary words that muddy the intent of the sentence.
- **Active voice** enhances the flow of academic writing and makes meaning more lively for the audience.

ACTIVE VOICE

Writing with **active voice** involves having the subject of the sentence act through the verb of the sentence. **The subject performs the action.**
Example: The **student** <u>writes</u> papers and poetry.
Student = subject
<u>writes</u>= action/verb

The subject (**student**) performs the action (<u>writes</u>).

PASSIVE VOICE

Writing with **passive voice** involves having the verb of the sentence act upon the subject of the sentence. The receiver of the action (direct object) sits before the do-er of an action (subject).
Example: The papers are being <u>written</u> by the **students**.
Papers= direct object
Students= subject because they complete the action
<u>written</u>= action/verb

CHANGE PASSIVE TO ACTIVE

Passive Sentence Example: The scholarship will be applied for by the boy.
1. **Identify the subject.**
Who performs the action?
The **boy** represents the subject because he performs the action.
2. **Identify the verb.**
What action does the subject perform?
The subject, the boy, **applies**, so that represents the verb.
3. **Change the "to be" phrase to a concise active verb.**

"Will be applied" changes to "apply."

Activated sentence: The boy applies for the scholarship.

KEY IDEAS

- Let the subject perform the action.
- Change "to be" phrases to concise versions of active verbs.
  - "To be" verbs: am, are, is, was, were, be, been, being
- With active voice, the subject of the sentence acts, but in passive voice, the verb acts upon the subject.
- Try to avoid expletive constructions such as "there is," "it is," and "there were."