

## Active vs. Passive Voice

The voice of a verb refers to the role played by the subject of a sentence. If the subject does the action in the sentence, then the verb is in the *active voice*. If the subject only receives the action (someone or something else does the action to the subject), then the verb is in the *passive voice*. Verbs in the passive voice lack strength because their subjects receive the action instead of doing it.

Passive: The car was buried in a snowdrift by the blizzard.

Active: The blizzard buried the car in a snowdrift.

Forms of the verb *be* (*be, am, is, are, was, were, being, been*) lack vigor because they convey no action. Passive verb forms are formed by combining one of the forms of the helping verb *be* with the past participle of the main verb. They are also often used in combination with a prepositional phrase beginning with *by*.

Ex: The dog is fed by my brother.

The dog was fed by my brother.

The dog will be fed by my brother.

Active verbs express meaning more emphatically and vigorously than their weaker counterparts. As a rule, choose an active verb and pair it with a subject that names the person or thing doing the action.

Ex: My brother feeds the dog.