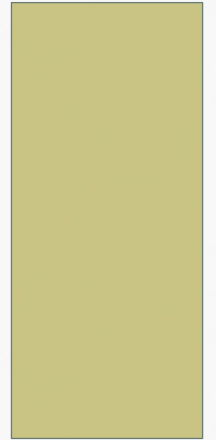


BEING YOUR OWN BEST EDITOR

EDITING SKILLS



COMMON WRITING PROBLEMS

- Long, wordy sentences
- Active vs. Passive Voice
- Dangling modifiers

LONG, WORDY SENTENCES

“The relationship between the nature of salt water to fresh water in the Edgartown Great Pond that fluctuates often is extremely important to everyone including scientists, residents, and environmentalists on Martha’s Vineyard.”

STRIVE FOR CLARITY AND BREVITY

- Accepted convention: 15 – 20 words
- Comprehension becomes threatened beyond this length
- Work your sentence down to the most important information.
- When necessary, break down into two or more sentences.
- Watch for repetition.
- Use details wisely!

SENTENCE REVISION

“The fluctuating salinity of EGP concerns many environmentalists, scientists, and residents.”

SENTENCE 1 REVISION

Literally, sustainable development refers to maintaining development over time. However, by the early 1990s, more than 70 definitions of sustainable development were in circulation. Despite their number, these definitions are important because they are the basis on which the means for achieving sustainable development in the future can be built.

SENTENCE 2 REVISION

During the 1960s, development thinking, encompassing both ideology and strategy, prioritized economic growth through the application of modern scientific and technical knowledge. This notion was considered the route to prosperity in the underdeveloped world. The "global development problem" was defined as one in which less developed nations needed to "catch up" with the West and enter the modern age of capitalism and liberal democracy. In short, they needed to engage in a form of modernization that was equated with westernization (and an associated faith in the rationality of science and technology).

ACTIVE VS. PASSIVE VOICE

- When active voice is used, the subject is doing the action.

Over one-third of the applicants to the school failed the entrance exam.

- When passive voice is used, the action is performed on the subject.

The entrance exam was failed by over one-third of the applicants to the school.

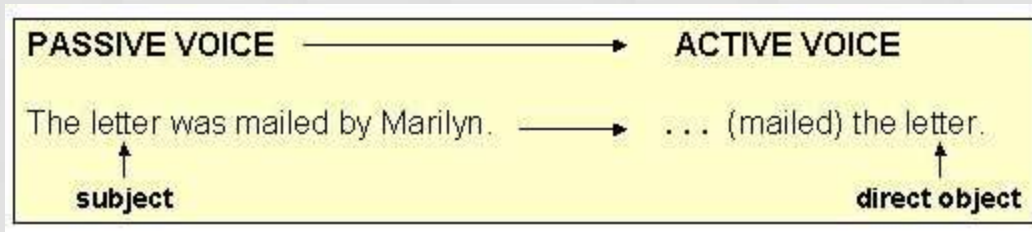
EXAMPLES

- The man must have eaten five hamburgers.
- Five hamburgers must have been eaten.

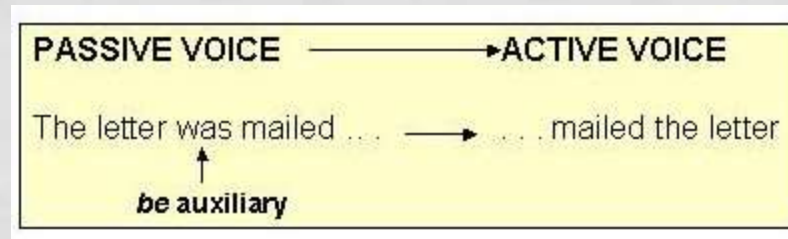
- The letter was mailed by Marilyn.
- Marilyn mailed the letter.

REVISING FROM PASSIVE TO ACTIVE

1. Move the passive sentence's subject into the active sentence's direct object slot.

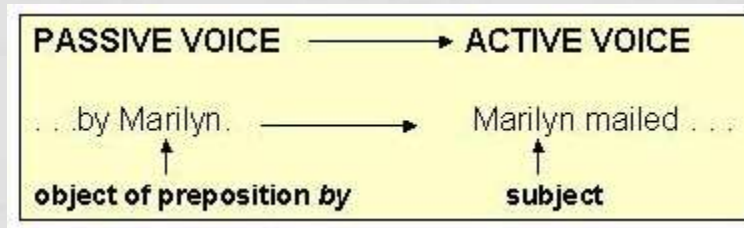


2. Remove the auxiliary verb be from the main verb and change the main verb's form if needed.



REVISING CONTINUED

3. Place the passive sentence's object into the subject slot.



The letter was mailed by Marilyn.

Marilyn mailed the letter.

REVISING PASSIVE SENTENCES

1. Fleming discovered penicillin.
2. McGraw-Hill published the books.
3. They are discussing the question now.
4. They are discussing my paper now.
5. Someone stole my papers.

DANGLING MODIFIERS

- A. Broken and dusty, Clarence found an old computer in the garage.
- B. Broken and dusty, the garage had an old computer that was found by Clarence.
- C. In the garage, Clarence found an old computer that was broken and dusty.

EXAMPLES

- Running for the bus, my book fell in the mud.
- Upon entering the doctor's office, a skeleton caught my attention.
- Climbing up the ladder carefully, the frightened cat was brought down from the tree.
- After a quick change into my hospital gown, the nurse told me to relax.

EDITING YOUR OWN WORK

- Read your work out loud.
 - You will stop “writing” and start “reading.”
 - You will hear your work as your readers do.
 - Read from a printed copy whenever possible.
 - Read slowly, utilizing any and all (or lack thereof) punctuation on the page.
- Have someone read your work to you.
 - Be prepared to take notes of anywhere the reader stumbles.
 - Note poor grammar, weak sentence structure, etc.
- Read your work backwards, last line first.
 - Allows you to break your train of thought.
 - Allows you to focus on sentence structure.

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