

## Passive Voice, Active Voice

Writing creates power and focus. The words you use and how you use them can control that power and focus. That's where active and passive voices come in. By the time you're done reading, you'll be on your way to writing more intentionally. And your readers will love you for it.

### What's the difference between passive and active?

Try to spot the difference with these examples:

<b>PASSIVE</b>	The championship was won by NCCU's basketball team after a thrilling final game. The championship was won after a thrilling final game.
<b>ACTIVE</b>	NCCU's basketball team won the championship after a thrilling final game.

In the two passive voice versions, the championship is the subject, the focus of the sentences. Now, look at the verb. The championship is not winning. Instead, the championship was won. The subject is just receiving the action. And because the performer of the verb is not the focus of passive voice sentences, you'll find that the sentences still make sense without them: *The championship was won after a thrilling final game.*

**Both sentences are passive because the subject is not actively doing anything, only receiving.** For that reason, passive voice is sometimes not as powerful or direct as active voice.

In the active voice sentence, the basketball team is winning the championship. The team, which is **the subject of the sentence, is DOING the action.** The team winning means something more than just a game being won.

### So which one should you use?

It depends on what you know and what you want to say. Check out the flowchart and the examples.

- **Passive:** The groundbreaking research findings were published in a prestigious journal. (emphasizes the research findings)
- **Active:** The researchers published the groundbreaking research findings in a prestigious journal. (emphasizes the researchers)

Use what you know about active and passive voices to **write intentionally**, knowingly emphasizing what should be emphasized.

