



Academic Writing

Important notice



At the end of this presentation there is a link to a Microsoft Forms quiz. It is recommended that you score an 80% or higher.

Please take your time viewing and studying this material before you proceed with the quiz.

Objectives

After studying this module, students will:

- Differentiate between the active and passive voice.
- Recognize the elements of formal register.
- Know which characteristics of informal register to avoid.
- Identify different points of view in writing.

Active and Passive Voice

Active Voice

- In the **active voice**, the **subject** performs the action of the verb.
- Examples:

Students handed-in the project before the due date.

I gave him a big hug.

After the game, **they** went to eat pizza.

Passive Voice

- In the **passive voice**, the **subject** receives the verb's action. The focus is on the object, instead of the subject.
- In the passive voice, the subject can also be omitted.
- Examples:
 - The projects** were handed-in by the students on time.
 - The bill** was signed into law this morning.
 - I** was added to the dean's list.

Constructing the Passive Voice

There are multiple ways to construct sentences in the passive voice. One of the most common structures is:

Object + **To Be verb** + **Past participle verb** + **by** + **agent** (can be omitted)

- **The class is taught by Anne.**
- **Dave was expelled.**
- **It will be released on Friday.**

Active vs. Passive Voice

- While both the active and passive voice are correct, the **active voice is preferred** in academic writing.
- Sentences in the **passive voice** tend to be wordy, less direct, and can even be confusing (especially if overused) because the grammatical structure emphasizes the object instead of the subject.
- Resort to the **passive voice** when the agent is unknown or when emphasis on the object is essential.

Register

Register refers to the style of language used in a particular communicative situation.

Informal vs. Formal Register

Informal register is characterized by:

- being casual and conversational.
- spontaneity, therefore, it does not necessarily follow conventional rules or structures.

Formal register is characterized by:

- strict adherence to grammatical rules.
- precise and concise language.

This is the **preferred** register in academic writing.

Informal Register

Colloquialisms

- Colloquialisms are words or phrases used in **familiar** conversations. They can include **idioms** and **slang**.
- Examples

They *trashed* it →
They destroyed it

He has *a lot* of money →
He is a millionaire.

Contractions

- Contractions are the shortened version of two combined words. Although very common, they are considered informal.
- Examples

it's → it is

can't → cannot

they're → they are

Formal Register

Concision

- Conciseness means to communicate a message with few words.
- Examples:

due to the fact that → because

I screamed loudly →

I screamed (a scream is loud by definition)

Precision

- Precision in writing is the quality of being exact, finding the best word or phrase for each context.
- Examples:

I bought something →

I bought new shoes

He said a lot of things →

He said it was justified and necessary.

Point of View

Point of view refers to the perspective from which a story is narrated.

How Point of View Affects Tone

The tone of a text can be defined as the attitude or style we assume when writing. The point of view (POV) affects how the reader interacts with and reacts to the text.

1

1st
Person
POV

- Text written from the **I/we** perspective
- Example: *We celebrated/ I love you.*

2

2nd
Person
POV

- Text written to **you**
- Example: *You are very friendly.*

3

3rd
Person
POV

- Text about **he/she/it/they**
- Example: *It is not acceptable/ They were frightened/ She is the best.*



3rd Person POV

In academic writing, 3rd person POV is generally preferred. Always consult your professor's instructions for each writing assignment.

Point of View

- For certain types of texts, such as argumentative essays, the 1st person POV is appropriate; nevertheless, these can also be written in 3rd person POV.

- Examples

I think this is the best solution. →

This is the best solution.

I found his story to be riveting yet brief. →

His story was riveting yet brief.



Dos

- ✓ Write in the active voice whenever possible
- ✓ Write concisely
- ✓ Write precisely or accurately
- ✓ Use full forms
- ✓ Use formal expressions
- ✓ Consult your professor about the best POV for each text



Don't

- x Overuse the passive voice
- x Be wordy and redundant x
Be vague and
ambiguous x Use
contractions
- x Use colloquialisms or slang
- x Choose POV randomly

Bibliography

- Calonia, Jennifer. "What Is Conciseness?" *Grammarly Blog*, Grammarly, 1 Oct. 2020, www.grammarly.com/blog/conciseness/#:~:text=Conciseness%20is%20communicating%20complete%20information,words%20to%20illustrate%20your%20point.
- Purdue Writing Lab. "Active and Passive Voice // Purdue Writing Lab." *Purdue Writing Lab*, owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/active_and_passive_voice/index.html.
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- Sama. "Your Ultimate Guide to The Passive Voice in English." *In English With Love*, 27 Nov. 2020, www.inenglishwithlove.com/blog/the-passive-voice-in-english

After completing the module, click on the following link to take the quiz and send the report to your professor:

<https://forms.office.com/r/M7YTjARV58>

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