Converting Passive Voice to Active Voice

Before you begin you will need to find the verb(s) in the sentence. A verb is defined as the part of speech that expresses action, occurrence, or a state of being.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action/Occurrence</th>
<th>State of Being</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I read for enjoyment.</td>
<td>Elephants exist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I bring good news.</td>
<td>I stand corrected.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Artists can train others to draw.</td>
<td>The soldier was combative.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There may be a storm tonight.</td>
<td>I feel restless.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The stars glitter in the sky.</td>
<td>The sky looks grey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The fruit will rot if left out.</td>
<td>Maria seems stressed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Passive voice is a wimpy, less direct way of saying something. A more direct way is to put the one performing the action in front of the thing or person being acted upon.

**Passive voice**

- **Thing or person being acted upon**
- **Verb in passive voice**
- **Performing the action**

Rents are controlled by the city.

**Active voice**

- **Performing the action**
- **Verb in active voice**
- **Thing or person being acted upon**

The city controls rents.
EXAMPLES:

PASSIVE  Tenants are protected by leases.
ACTIVE   Leases protect tenants.

PASSIVE  The coolant pumps were destroyed by a surge of power.
ACTIVE   A surge of power destroyed the coolant pumps.

PASSIVE  The paper was written by Sharon.
ACTIVE   Sharon wrote the paper.

Try converting a few sentences on your own:

PASSIVE -- The lamppost was hit by the car.
ACTIVE ____________________________________________.

PASSIVE – The flyers were distributed by Dana.
ACTIVE ____________________________________________.

PASSIVE – Experiments have been conducted by scientists to test the hypothesis.
ACTIVE -- ____________________________________________.

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

Web resources for further study:

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/passive.htm

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/g_actpass.html

http://wps.ablongman.com/long_fowler_lbh_9/0,7987,822588,-00.html