Converting Passive Voice to Active Voice

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

**Action/Occurrence Verbs**

I read for enjoyment.
I bring good news.
Artists can train others to draw.
There may be a storm tonight.
The stars glitter in the sky.
The fruit will rot if left out.

**State of Being Verbs**

Elephants exist.
I stand corrected.
The soldier was combative.
I feel restless.
The sky looks gray.
Maria seems stressed.

**Passive Voice**

Passive voice is a wimpy, less direct way of saying something.

Thing or person being acted upon  then  Verb in passive voice  then  Thing or person performing the action

Rents
are controlled
by the city.

**Active Voice**

A more direct way is to put the one performing the action in front of the thing or person being acted upon.

Thing or person performing the action  then  Verb in active voice  then  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.

EXERCISES

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:

This handout was created by the Writing Centers at YVC.
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