



The Power of Active Voice

Workshop Objectives



By the end of this workshop, you will be able to:

- Define active voice and passive voice.
- Differentiate between active voice and passive voice.
- Identify the clues that indicate you're writing in passive voice.
- Rewrite passive voice sentences to active voice sentences.

What is Voice?



“Voice” refers to how a verb represents the subject in a sentence.

There are two types of voice:

- Active—This form speaks in a direct tone by clearly identifying the subject performing the action.
- Passive—This form speaks indirectly, often obscuring the subject performing the action.

Note: Many people confuse passive voice with “past tense.” They are not the same at all. Past tense sentences can be either active or passive.

Benefits of Active Voice



- Passive voice often obscures the subject performing the action, which leads to misinterpretation. We strive to write clearly in plain language.
- Active Voice:
 - States your intentions directly and clearly
 - Reduces wordiness (you actually use fewer words to express yourself)
 - Signals to the reader who is responsible for performing the action

Exercise



Read the instructions below, then answer the questions on the next slide:

- Using Outlook, set up a time to meet the Surveyor to review the purpose and function of the Expense Reimbursement Form.
- Prior to the meeting, the form is e-mailed to the surveyor.
- The form is reviewed.
- The form is e-mailed to the supervisor.

Exercise: Questions



Questions:

- Who is responsible for meeting with the surveyor?
- Who is responsible for e-mailing the form to the surveyor?
- Who is responsible for reviewing the form?
- Who faxes the form to the supervisor?

Exercise: Answers



Here are the instructions rewritten in active voice:

- Using Outlook, set up a time to meet the Surveyor to review the purpose and function of the Expense Reimbursement Form.
- Prior to the meeting, email the form to the surveyor.
- The surveyor reviews the form.
- Once approved, instruct the surveyor to email the form to their supervisor.

Exercise: Answers to Questions

Answers to the Questions:

- Who is responsible for meeting with the surveyor?
Answer: You (the user)
- Who is responsible for e-mailing the form to the surveyor?
Answer: You (the user)
- Who is responsible for reviewing the form?
Answer: The surveyor
- Who faxes the form to the supervisor?
Answer: The surveyor

Examples



Passive Voice	Rewritten as Active	Benefits of the Rewrite
Your document has been divided into three sections.	Sheila divided your document into three sections.	Clarifies that Sheila divided your document.
A number of benefits are provided by following investigative protocols.	Investigative protocols provide a number of benefits.	Reduced number of words in the sentence from ten to seven.
The directory is updated each month.	The administrative assistant updates the directory each month.	Answers the question, "Who updates the directory?"
These interviews can be leveraged.	The pharmacy surveyor can leverage these interviews.	Avoids having more than one surveyor performing work.

When is Passive Okay?



- Passive voice is not evil. There are areas where it is preferred:
 - Journalism
 - Politics
 - Law
 - Leadership
 - Anywhere you need to obscure the subject and/or avoid blame
- Surveyors do not want to obscure the subject. We want to write clearly, so we write in active voice.

Word Clues that Alert Passive Voice

When writing, there are several verbs that signal to you that you're about to write in passive voice.

- Has been
- Have been
- Were
- By (when used as a verb modifier)

Words to use with caution:

- Should
- Could
- Would
- Will be
- Can be
- May be

Exercise: Part One



Identify the following sentences as either active or passive:

Sentence	Passive or Active?
The MDS indicated Resident #7 was not involved.	
This change impacts approximately 300 facilities.	
Surveyor Ashley will provide Nursing Services survey support.	
An electronic copy of all materials may be provided to the survey team.	
Darla Evans should set up the meeting.	
The records can be made accessible to the Surveyor through a computer workstation.	
TruHeart Hospital's Medical Records Policy and Procedure was out of date.	
Surveyor Michael has been managed in Region Six.	

Exercise: Answers to Part One

Use the word clues to identify the following sentences as either active or passive:

Sentence	Passive or Active?
The MDS indicated Resident #7 was not involved.	<i>Active</i>
This change impacts approximately 300 facilities.	<i>Active</i>
Surveyor Ashley will provide Nursing Services survey support.	<i>Active</i>
An electronic copy of all materials may be provided to the survey team.	<i>Passive</i>
Darla Evans should set up the meeting.	<i>Active</i>
The records can be made accessible to the Surveyor through a computer workstation.	<i>Passive</i>
TruHeart Hospital's Medical Records Policy and Procedure was out of date.	<i>Active</i>
Surveyor Michael has been managed in Region Six.	<i>Passive</i>

Exercise: Part Two



Rewrite the following passive sentences:

- The Center for Disease Control (CDC) is a standard of practice organization used by surveyors for information.
- After several months, 36 surveys were attended.
- They were sent a medical record by mistake from the client.
- The field is populated by ACTs.
- The report is created automatically by the system.

Exercise: Possible Corrections One

- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is a standard-of-practice organization used by Surveyors for information.
Rewrite: Surveyors use the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for standards of practice information.
- After several months, 36 surveys were attended.
Rewrite: After several months, Carla Owens attended 36 surveys.

Exercise: Possible Corrections Two

- They were sent a medical record by mistake from the facility.

Rewrite: The facility sent the medical record by mistake.

- The field is populated by ACTs.

Rewrite: ACTs populates the field.

- The report is created automatically by the system.

Rewrite: The system creates the report automatically.

Don't Feel Overwhelmed



- By now, you have noticed that passive voice is more comfortable. It is how we typically speak and write.
- Learning to write actively takes practice. You will get the hang of it through coaching and the editing process.

Your preceptor is here to help!

Thank You



Thank you for your kind attention.