

PASSIVE VS ACTIVE VOICE

Passive voice is not incorrect, but readers will usually put down a book filled with passive voice. Writing in the passive is boring writing.

The problem isn't so much passive voice. The problem is "weak sentences." 99+% of the time a passive voice sentence it is also a weak sentence.

Finishing a novel or non-fiction book is a great deal of work, and if you need to use weak sentences to finish your first draft, do it. Once your story is completed, fix the weak sentences in a revision.

A sentence can be weak even after changing it from passive to active voice.

I was tired and sleepy. (The real problem here is the verb *to be* and its various forms—*is, am, are, was, were.*)

Just changing the sentence to active doesn't always make a good sentence:

I felt tired and sleepy. (Using 'felt' is a tell.)

Feeling tired, sleepiness overwhelmed me. (Most editors and publishers do not like sentences starting with -ing words. In addition, this sentence includes a misplaced modifier.)

Both these have active verbs, but they are still weak sentences. A strong sentence is one that grabs the reader in a way that puts them in the story:

My heavy eyelids drooped until I forced them open. My lower back ached but I could stand the discomfort for a few minutes longer.

Every reader at one time or another fought to keep his or her eyes open. These sentences allow the reader to identify with the story and the character.

If your story is filled with weak sentences, you will get rejection after rejection.

Web sites of interest :

<http://jabrambarneck.com/2012/09/17/painting-away-passive-voice/>

<https://jerz.setonhill.edu/writing/grammar-and-syntax/active-and-passive-verbs/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4-BIDIIjU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXgGTufJRgo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6pHfjH0Efg>