



Module Five

Task: Active prose

Prose should always be ACTIVE rather than PASSIVE. The subject should drive the action. For example:

ACTIVE: I live in a house.

PASSIVE: The house is lived in by me. 'I' is the subject.

The house is the noun.

'Live' is the verb.

ACTIVE: She soon repented her words.

PASSIVE: It was not long before she was very sorry that she had said what she had.

[Strunk and White, Elements of Style]

ACTIVE: Leaves covered the ground.

PASSIVE: There were a great number of dead leaves lying on the ground. [Strunk and White, Elements of Style]

Exercise

Rewrite these passive phrases as active.

1. The dirt was dragged along the ground by Henry.
2. The postbox was filled by the postman.
3. The plains were roamed by giraffes.

Now check each sentence in your own manuscript is active.

