

# Unit 2

## 2.1 Use the active voice

"Subject verb object"

- Turn passive voice back to active voice (Identify subject, verb and object)
- Feels more natural, more direct

## 2.2 Is it really OK to use "We" and "I"?

- **Yes, it's OK.**
- To use the active voice, you usually have to use We and I.
  - Active voice is livelier and easier to read
- It is a myth that avoiding first-person pronouns lends objectivity to the paper. *You ran the experiments and interpreted the data! The experiments and analysis did not materialize out of thin air.*
- By agreeing to be an author on the paper, you are taking responsibility for its content. Thus, you should also claim responsibility for the assertions in the text by using "we" or "I"
- Journals want the active voice. Guidelines.

## When is it OK to use the passive voice?

- Method section
- What was done is more important than who did it.
- Readers tend to skim the methods section for key words rather than reading it as prose.
- May be more effort than it's worth to avoid using "we" and "I" in every sentence

## 2.3 Active voice practice

## 2.4 Write with verbs

- Use strong verbs

- Make sentences go
- Pick the right verb. Use "to be" verbs purposefully and sparingly.
- Don't turn verbs into nouns
  - Kills verbs
- Don't bury the main verb
  - Keep the subject and main verb close together at the start of the sentence

## 2.5 Practice examples

- Don't use "hedge" word
- Avoid dead weight.

## 2.6 Few grammar tips

1. "Data are" not "Data is"
2. Affect vs effect (Affect is the verb "to influence", Effect is the noun form of this influence)
3. Compared to vs compared with
  - Compare to = to point out similarities between different things
  - Compare with = to point out differences between similar things
4. That vs which
  - "That" is the restrictive (defining) pronoun. That-clause cannot be eliminated without changing the meaning of the sentence
  - "Which" is the nonrestrictive (non-defining) pronoun. Which-clause can be eliminated without altering the basic meaning of the sentence
5. Singular antecedents. Do not use "they" or "their" when the subject is singular. To avoid gender choice, turn to a plural.