OLYMPIADS SCHOOL/GRADE 9 AND 10 WRITING/HANDOUT 15

GRAMMAR

When do we use active and passive voice of verb?
http://www.ielts-useful-tips.com/voice-of-verb.html

Voice of verb is an aspect that tells whether the subject is the doer or the receiver of the action. It can be active or passive.

Active Voice
When the subject is the doer of the action (verb), the voice of verb is active.

To make an active voice:
Subject + main verb

example: He passed the test.
In this sentence, the subject He did the action which was passing the test.

Passive Voice
The verb is in passive voice when the subject receives the action.

To make a passive voice:
Subject + auxiliary verb (to be) + main verb (past participle*)

example: The test was passed by him.
In this sentence, the subject test did not do the action. It was “him” who did. The subject “test” receives the action done by him.

Uses of passive voice
Passive voice is used to:
1. Give importance to the object.
Rather than saying: Aldrin won the presidency; we say:
The presidency was won by Aldrin. (presidency is given more importance)

2. When the doer is unknown.
Aldrin was asked to run. (It is unknown who asked Aldrin to run)
Changing Voice of Verb

It is simple to change active to passive and vice versa.

To change active to passive, simply make the subject in the active voice the object of the sentence in the passive voice introduced by the preposition “by”.

To change passive to active, simply make the object of the preposition (the word after by) the subject of the sentence.

Please note though that when changing voice, the verb must agree in number with the subject, and the tense (time) must be the same as the tense in the original sentence.

Examples:
Active: (1) The military rescued the victims.
Passive: (1) The victims were rescued by the military.
Passive: (2) A fundraising activity was organized by him.
Active: (2) He organized a fund raising activity.
Active: (3) The victims thanked the military.
Passive: (3) The military were thanked by the victims.

In sentence 1(passive voice), were rescued is in simple past tense because the tense in the active voice is also simple past tense and “were” was used because the subject “victims” is plural. In sentence 2, organized was used in the active voice because the verb “was organized” in the passive voice is in simple past as well. In sentence 3, the subject military is a collective noun taken as individuals (members of the military), so plural verb “were thanked” was used in the passive voice.

WRITING SKILLS
http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/paragraphs.shtml

Paragraphs and Topic Sentences
A paragraph is a series of sentences that are organized and coherent, and are all related to a single topic. Almost every piece of writing you do that is longer than a few sentences should be organized into paragraphs. This is because paragraphs show a reader where the subdivisions of an essay begin and end, and thus help the reader see the organization of the essay and grasp its main points.

Paragraphs can contain many different kinds of information. A paragraph could contain a series of brief examples or a single long illustration of a general point. It might describe a place, character, or process; narrate a series of events; compare or contrast two or more things; classify items into categories; or describe causes and effects. Regardless of the kind of information they contain, all paragraphs share certain characteristics. One of the most important of these is a topic sentence.

TOPIC SENTENCES
A well-organized paragraph supports or develops a single controlling idea, which is expressed in a sentence called the topic sentence. A topic sentence has several important functions: it substantiates or supports an essay’s thesis statement; it unifies the content of a paragraph and directs the order of the sentences; and it advises the reader of the subject to be discussed and how the paragraph will discuss it. Readers generally look to the first few sentences in a paragraph to determine the subject and perspective of the paragraph. That’s why it’s often best to put the topic sentence at the very beginning of the paragraph. In some cases, however, it’s more effective to place

another sentence before the topic sentence—for example, a sentence linking the current paragraph to the previous one, or one providing background information.

Although most paragraphs should have a topic sentence, there are a few situations when a paragraph might not need a topic sentence. For example, you might be able to omit a topic sentence in a paragraph that narrates a series of events, if a paragraph continues developing an idea that you introduced (with a topic sentence) in the previous paragraph, or if all the sentences and details in a paragraph clearly refer—perhaps indirectly—to a main point. The vast majority of your paragraphs, however, should have a topic sentence.

PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE

Most paragraphs in an essay have a three-part structure—introduction, body, and conclusion. You can see this structure in paragraphs whether they are narrating, describing, comparing, contrasting, or analyzing information. Each part of the paragraph plays an important role in communicating your meaning to your reader.

Introduction: the first section of a paragraph; should include the topic sentence and any other sentences at the beginning of the paragraph that give background information or provide a transition.

Body: follows the introduction; discusses the controlling idea, using facts, arguments, analysis, examples, and other information.

Conclusion: the final section; summarizes the connections between the information discussed in the body of the paragraph and the paragraph's controlling idea.

The following paragraph illustrates this pattern of organization. In this paragraph the topic sentence and concluding sentence (CAPITALIZED) both help the reader keep the paragraph's main point in mind.

SCIENTISTS HAVE LEARNED TO SUPPLEMENT THE SENSE OF SIGHT IN NUMEROUS WAYS. In front of the tiny pupil of the eye **they put**, on Mount Palomar, a great monocle 200 inches in diameter, and with it see 2000 times farther into the depths of space. **Or they look** through a small pair of lenses arranged as a microscope into a drop of water or blood, and magnify by as much as 2000 diameters the living creatures there, many of which are among man's most dangerous enemies. **Or**, if we want to see distant happenings on earth, **they use** some of the previously wasted electromagnetic waves to carry television images which they re-create as light by whipping tiny crystals on a screen with electrons in a vacuum. **Or they can bring** happenings of long ago and far away as colored motion pictures, by arranging silver atoms and color-absorbing molecules to force light waves into the patterns of original reality. **Or** if we want to see into the center of a steel casting or the chest of an injured child, **they send** the information on a beam of penetrating short-wave X rays, and then convert it back into images we can see on a screen or photograph. THUS ALMOST EVERY TYPE OF ELECTROMAGNETIC RADIATION YET DISCOVERED HAS BEEN USED TO EXTEND OUR SENSE OF SIGHT IN SOME WAY.

George Harrison, "Faith and the Scientist"

COHERENCE

In a coherent paragraph, each sentence relates clearly to the topic sentence or controlling idea, but there is more to coherence than this. If a paragraph is coherent, each sentence flows smoothly into the next without obvious shifts or jumps. A coherent paragraph also highlights the ties between old information and new information to make the structure of ideas or arguments clear to the reader.

Along with the smooth flow of sentences, a paragraph's coherence may also be related to its length. If you have written a very long paragraph, one that fills a double-spaced typed page, for example, you should check it carefully to see if it should start a new paragraph where the original paragraph wanders from its controlling idea. On the other hand, if a paragraph is very short (only one or two sentences, perhaps), you may need to develop its controlling idea more thoroughly, or combine it with another paragraph.

A number of other techniques that you can use to establish coherence in paragraphs are described below.

Repeat key words or phrases. Particularly in paragraphs in which you define or identify an important idea or theory, be consistent in how you refer to it. This consistency and repetition will bind the paragraph together and help your reader understand your definition or description.

Create parallel structures. Parallel structures are created by constructing two or more phrases or sentences that have the same grammatical structure and use the same parts of speech. By creating parallel structures you make your sentences clearer and easier to read. In addition, repeating a pattern in a series of consecutive sentences helps your reader see the connections between ideas. In the paragraph above about scientists and the sense of sight, several sentences in the body of the paragraph have been constructed in a parallel way. The parallel structures (which have been **emphasized**) help the reader see that the paragraph is organized as a set of examples of a general statement.

Be consistent in point of view, verb tense, and number. Consistency in point of view, verb tense, and number is a subtle but important aspect of coherence. If you shift from the more personal "you" to the impersonal "one," from past to present tense, or from "a man" to "they," for example, you make your paragraph less coherent. Such inconsistencies can also confuse your reader and make your argument more difficult to follow.

Use transition words or phrases between sentences and between paragraphs. Transitional expressions emphasize the relationships between ideas, so they help readers follow your train of thought or see connections that they might otherwise miss or misunderstand. The following paragraph shows how carefully chosen transitions (CAPITALIZED) lead the reader smoothly from the introduction to the conclusion of the paragraph.

I don't wish to deny that the flattened, minuscule head of the large-bodied "stegosaurus" houses little brain from our subjective, top-heavy perspective, BUT I do wish to assert that we should not expect more of the beast. FIRST OF ALL, large animals have relatively smaller brains than related, small animals. The correlation of brain size with body size among kindred animals (all reptiles, all mammals, FOR EXAMPLE) is remarkably regular. AS we move from small to large animals, from mice to elephants or small lizards to Komodo dragons, brain size increases, BUT not so fast as body size. IN OTHER WORDS, bodies grow faster than brains, AND large animals have low ratios of brain weight to body weight. IN FACT, brains grow only about two-thirds as fast as bodies. SINCE we have no reason to believe that large animals are consistently stupider than their smaller relatives, we must conclude that large animals require relatively less brain to do as well as smaller animals. IF we do not recognize this relationship, we are likely to underestimate the mental power of very large animals, dinosaurs in particular.

Stephen Jay Gould, "Were Dinosaurs Dumb?"

SOME USEFUL TRANSITIONS
(modified from Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*)

To show addition:
again, and, also, besides, equally important, first (second, etc.), further, furthermore, in addition, in the first place, moreover, next, too

To give examples:
for example, for instance, in fact, specifically, that is, to illustrate

To compare:
also, in the same manner, likewise, similarly

To contrast:
although, and yet, at the same time, but, despite, even though, however, in contrast, in spite of, nevertheless, on the contrary, on the other hand, still, though, yet

To summarize or conclude:
all in all, in conclusion, in other words, in short, in summary, on the whole, that is, therefore, to sum up

To show time:
after, afterward, as, as long as, as soon as, at last, before, during, earlier, finally, formerly, immediately, later, meanwhile, next, since, shortly, subsequently, then, thereafter, until, when, while

To show place or direction:
above, below, beyond, close, elsewhere, farther on, here, nearby, opposite, to the left (north, etc.)

To indicate logical relationship:
accordingly, as a result, because, consequently, for this reason, hence, if, otherwise, since, so, then, therefore, thus

WRITING/MEDIA LITERACY

Watch these short films.

https://www.shortoftheweek.com/2016/10/17/hum/ (“”Hum”)

https://www.shortoftheweek.com/2016/09/26/planet-unknown/ (“Planet Unknown”)

Read two reviews before comparing and contrasting the two short films. (You’ll be asked to write at least one well-developed paragraph.) These reviews are from Short of the Week, the website that has featured the two short films.

Review of “Hum”

It is quite remarkable how much empathy can be wrung out audiences if you put a pair of sad eyes on a box. Despite a relatively straightforward narrative in Hum, its creative team certainly knows the importance of character design, and, in a stylishly impressive short reminiscent of WALL-E, they are able to ladle on the melodrama to such an extent that this reviewer neared his breaking point.

A wistful robot’s purpose is to continue in the day-to-day drudgery its work, sequestered from the outside world. Its only opportunity to glimpse the inherent possibilities of life comes from collecting scraps of trash left over from the restaurant’s birthday parties. Our robot is noticeably unfulfilled, but, in a gauzy, beautifully sunlit scene, an unexpected visitor invades its squalid space and perhaps can fill our protagonist with the hope and motivation to break free from its prescribed fate.

While narratively the film is limited, emotionally it is adroit, and visually it is spectacular. A student work completed in only a single semester, the film blends limited live-action photography with its animation and VFX, endeavoring to a photo-realism that yet preserves a degree of fantasy. Shallow depth of field and intense lighting provide pizazz to a film that is very appealing in its art-direction.

The writer/director of the film is Tom Teller, who was a Junior during the production. Created at Chapman University’s Dodge College of Film, the film naturally brings to mind another 3D robot film that came out of the same school, Jack Anderson’s Wirecutters, which was a finalist for the Student Academy Award and has received over 2M views online to date. Teller will see if he can’t match those accomplishments with his Senior film, Icarus, which is currently on the festival circuit, but in the meantime the precocious talent has created a production company called Frame 48 with fellow students from Dodge, and is in the midst of earning his Masters in Business Administration. Very smart to think about the business of this creativity game Mr. Teller! Good luck.

Review of "Planet Unknown"

Inspired by the two robot characters, TARS and CASE, from Christopher Nolan's epic Sci-fi feature *Interstellar*, Shawn Wang's student film *Planet Unknown* is an action-packed adventure across the unexplored terrain of an alien planet. Following two Space Rovers as they try to discover if this world is habitable for humans, one-man animation team Wang presents his audience with 9-minutes of crisp, meticulously-detailed animation that orbits an adrenaline-fuelled storyline.

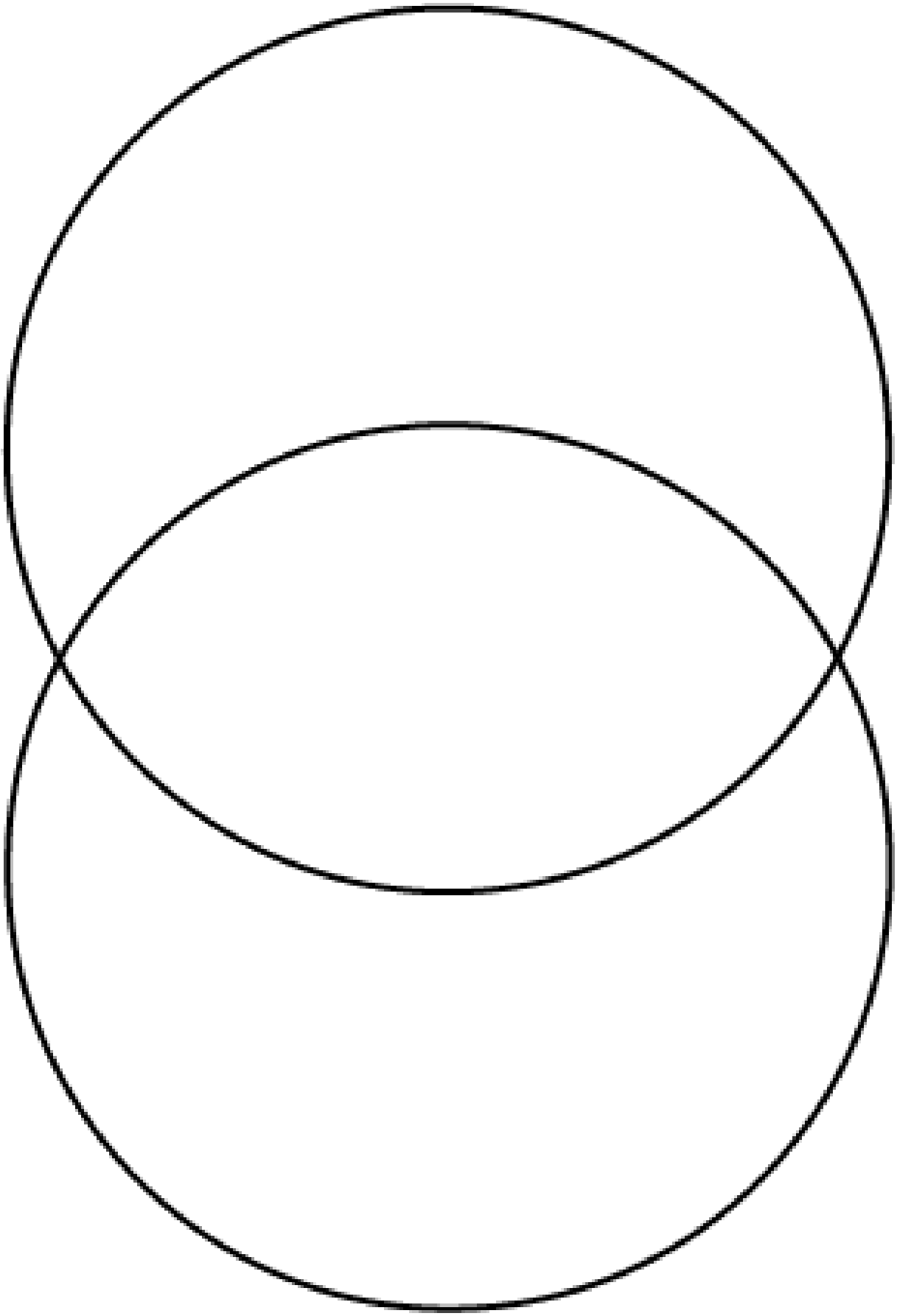
Although narrative originality is something we strongly champion here on Short of the Week, there are occasions where we'll feature films even though they feel like they are a little lacking in this department – *Planet Unknown* is one such example.
Wang's story doesn't feel unique, in fact it's hard to watch it and not think of Pixar's *Wall-E* or recent SotW feature *Wire Cutters* (Wang also cites *Toy Story*, *CHAPPiE*, NASA documentaries about Mars Rover Curiosity, and short films *The Third & The Seventh*, *Abiogenesis*, *Wanderers*, & *Dawn of the…Stuff* as influences), but it excels so strongly in other departments, it felt a short impossible to ignore.

To put it simply…*Planet Unknown* is glorious, unapologetic eye-candy! Overflowing with carefully-created textures, particles and environments, Wang's vivid visuals are a real joy to behold. In fact, Wang's film is technically so impressive, it's hard to believe he created all the animation for the film single-handedly – but that's exactly what he did.

Utilising a long list of tools throughout its creation (as Wang lists: "Cinema 4D, plugin TurbulenceFD and Octane for C4D were heavily used for most of the tasks. Houdini was used to fracture things. Then Zbrush for sculpting, Mari for texturing, After Effects for compositing, and Premiere for editing. Python and JavaScript were used for scripting in C4D, Mari and AE, which helped speed up the process a lot"), *Planet Unknown* took 11-months to complete, with a further 3-months for Bristol-based Echoic Audio to complete the original score & sound design.

Currently recovering from all the man hours he put into *Planet Unknown*, Wang has recently graduated from the Communication University of China (we hope you got top marks for this impressive short Shawn?), but looks to create further independent films in the future.

If he can go on to replicate the success of other one-man animation/VFX teams we've featured on Short of the Week the future certainly looks bright for Shawn Wang.



Write a paragraph that responds to both short films. Ensure that it contains a clearly defined topic sentence.