

Passive voice: You're hiding something!

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You thought your CIF was hard to understand? What about that convoluted writing style in your discussion section? Communicating science is hard enough, let's stop making it dreary to read. They exist, but you won't find many papers written in the active voice (in English-speaking journals). You'd never know that most journals *actually encourage the use of the active voice*, and yet every editor sees submissions written entirely in the passive voice.

Passive-voice writing conveniently hides details the author may wish to obscure; but let's slay that practice! Other techniques help evade the risk of commitment – “hedging” by way of qualifiers and apologetic quotation marks.



Even comic-strip authors know about poor writing. Once we've nailed the science, let's make it worth reading about.

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