



Using Scientific Language

# Focus on Third Person



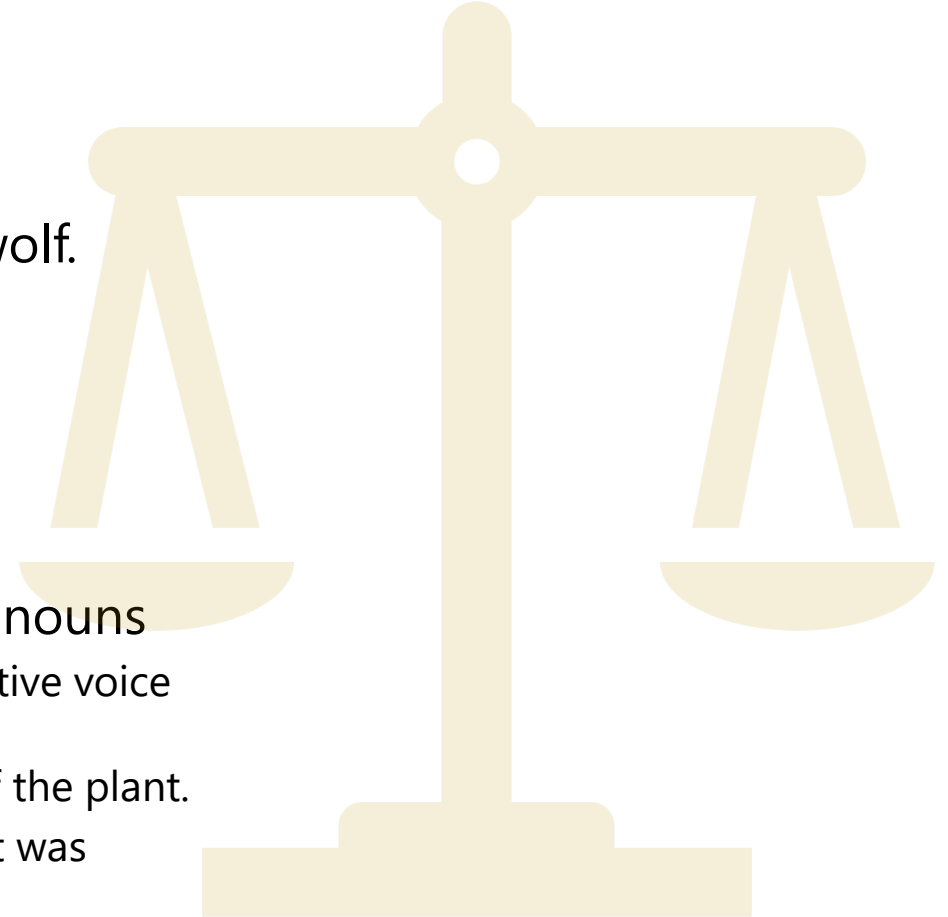
- Avoid talking about yourself and others
- The focus is on the work you did, not you
- Limit or eliminate personal pronouns
  - I
  - We
  - Me
  - You
- Exceptions
  - Graduate and Professional Writing
    - (as you will see when you look for sources)
  - APA 7<sup>th</sup>
    - (check the manual/website when writing in this style)
  - Professor's Preference
    - (contact your professor directly if you are unsure)



# Balance Active and Passive Voice



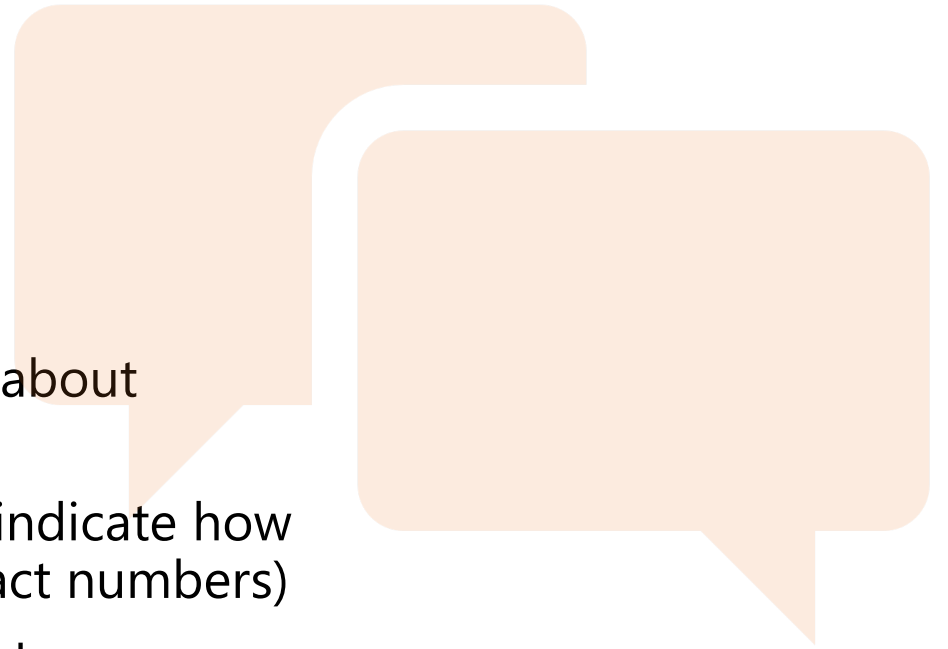
- Active: The wolf attacked the deer.
- Passive: The deer was attacked by the wolf.
- Use active voice more often
  - It makes your experiment “come alive”
- Use passive voice to avoid personal pronouns
  - The third person rule is stronger than the active voice rule
  - Active, first person: I measured the height of the plant.
  - Passive, third person: The height of the plant was measured.



# Be Explicit



- Avoid vague terms
  - They/them
  - It
  - A little/few
  - A lot/much
- Directly name whatever you are talking about
  - Or use a specific term such as "the subject"
- If you use increase/decrease, you must indicate how much it increased or decreased (use exact numbers)
- Vague: It doubled over the course of an hour.
- Explicit: The growth rate doubled over the course of an hour.



# A Note on Abbreviations



- Abbreviating metric units (millimeters = mm) is generally acceptable.
- Latin abbreviations (i.e., e.g., etc.) are acceptable depending on discipline
  - Life and natural sciences: avoid
  - Social and psychological sciences: use sparingly
- Acronyms need to be introduced the first time you use the term
  - Example: body-mass index (BMI)
  - Avoid making up an acronym unless you are introducing a new concept you developed
  - (don't name it unless it is yours)





# UHCL Writing Center

---

SSCB 2101 | [writingcenter@uhcl.edu](mailto:writingcenter@uhcl.edu) | 281-283-2910