ACTIVE VOICE: The subject of the sentence performs the action. As opposed to passive voice where the person place, thing, or idea that has acted sits in an object position or does not appear at all.

Causes of passive construction:
1. Overuse of the verb “be” (am, is, are):
   Passive: A decision was reached by the committee.
   Active: The committee reached a decision.

2. Vague introductory phrase (there are/it is):
   Passive: There is a big gate guarding the entrance to the park.
   Active: A big gate guards the entrance to the park.

3. Converting actions into abstract nouns:
   Passive: Courtesy toward customers is shown in the behavior of salespeople.
   Active: Salespeople behave courteously toward customers.

4. Overly generalized, unnecessary, or apologetic narrative interjections:
   Passive: The topic explained in the aforementioned will be examined in the essay to follow.
   Active: Delete that entire meaningless sentence; just write the essay!

Ways to stay in Active Voice:
2. Be direct (avoid “there are” “it is”). “Cut to the chase.”
3. Be exact with verb choices (avoid forms of “be”).
4. Convert abstract nouns back into verb form.
5. Convey an attitude of confidence.

Uses for passive voice:
1. To emphasize what happened, not who did it.
2. The performer of the action is unknown.
3. The performer of the action is unimportant.
4. To show objectivity as in a scientific or technical report.
5. To be diplomatic or polite rather than accusatory.
Practice in Active Voice: Activate these passive sentences.

A.
1. Traffic is problematic due to the slow down of hundreds of commuters, with the resulting increase of “late” employees.
2. It is against policy for employees to be late to their jobs.
3. There are many workers who have people who are depending on them to arrive on time.
4. Being late is the worry of employees.
5. Dismissal from employment is an action taken by many employers.
6. Threatened job security has been the result of increased traffic congestion.

B. 1. Tom’s application was rejected by the interviewer.
2. Our college is always the winner of the basketball conference.
3. That candy has a sour taste.

Possible correct answers for Active Voice Exercise:
1. Traffic’s slow-down of hundreds of commuters has increased the numbers of “late” employees.
   Or: The problem with traffic is that it slow-down hundreds of commuters, and thus increases the number of “late” employees.
   Or: Traffic slows-down commuters and makes employees late
2. The policy forbids lateness.
   Or: Employers forbid employees to be late.
   Or: Employers set policies against arriving late.
3. However, people depend on workers to arrive on-time.
4. Employees worry about being late.
5. Many employers will fire “late” employees.
6. Increased traffic congestion threatens employment.
B.1. The interviewer rejected Tom’s application.
2. Our college always wins the basketball conference.
3. That candy tastes sour.