

picky with their prose that they kill that “constant joy of sudden discovery, of happy accident.” That’s what makes the otherwise toilsome job of writing fun.

Few of the arcane rules of journalism are so resolute that they can not be ignored or broken. If you do break a rule, though, be sure you know why you’re doing it. One definition of a professional journalist—or a professional anything else—is that he or she knows the rules well enough to know when they can be broken.

Exercises

A. Passive to active voice. Rewrite the following sentences, changing the voice from passive to active.

1. The suspects were arrested by California Highway Patrol officers.
2. The Oscars were provided by the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences.
3. The report concluded that perhaps \$10 billion a year is added to U.S. economic productivity by immigrants.
4. Labor unions and advocates for the poor say it would be illegal and unfair for welfare recipients to be forced to work for less than the minimum wage.
5. A soul-infused tone was set by the singer for the evening.
6. Penalties against the New York Knicks were upheld Friday by a U.S. district judge, hours before the Knicks faced the sixth game of their National Basketball Association playoff game.
7. The quality of the apples in Washington is helped by the state’s soil and climate condition.
8. Big words often are used to impress readers.
9. The operations of a commuter airline has been suspended by the Federal Aviation Administration.
10. A drop of more than 100 points was registered by the Dow Jones Industrial Average as the result of a quarter-percent raising of the rate that the Federal Reserve Board charges the nation’s banks.

B. Being verbs to action verbs. Rewrite the following sentences and transform the being verbs into action verbs, without altering the meaning of the sentences.

1. The president says he is hopeful that the talks will lead to an accord.
2. Privately, officials are doubtful that the two sides will ever get together.
3. He has been a teacher for 14 years.
4. The blood bank is in need of more donations, especially of “O” negative.
5. He is the self-proclaimed first citizen of the new regime.
6. Smokejumpers from the Oglalla Sioux nation were flown in to

help contain the forest fire. (This one needs active voice as well as an action verb.)

7. The chief prosecutor in the James Earl Ray case says it is "more than unlikely" that there was a conspiracy in the 1968 assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.
8. County officials were in review of the records of a day-care center where a 10-month old boy died from what they believe was shaken-baby syndrome.
9. The Atlanta Braves are in anticipation of winning another National League baseball championship, but their goal is bigger than that.
10. Journalists are sworn to say that no matter what goes wrong, it isn't their fault.

Suggested Rewrites or Edits

A. Passive to active voice

1. California Highway Patrol officers arrested the suspects.
2. The Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences provided the Oscars.
3. The report concluded that immigrants add perhaps \$10 billion a year to U.S. economic productivity.
4. Labor unions and advocates for the poor say it would be illegal and unfair to force welfare recipients to work for less than the minimum wage.
5. The singer set a soul-infused tone for the evening.
6. A U.S. district judge upheld penalties against the New York Knicks, hours before the Knicks faced the sixth game of their National Basketball Association playoff game.
7. The soil and climate conditions of the state of Washington help the quality of the apples.
8. Writers often use big words to impress readers.
9. The Federal Aviation Administration has suspended the operations of a commuter airline.
10. The Federal Reserve Board's quarter-percent hike in the rate it charges the nation's banks has caused a 100-point drop in the Dow Jones Industrial Average.

B. Being verbs to action verbs

1. The president says he hopes the talks will lead to an accord.
2. Privately, officials doubt that the two sides will ever get together.
3. He has taught for 14 years.
4. The blood bank needs more donations, especially of "O" negative.
5. He calls himself the first citizen of the new regime.
6. Smokejumpers from the Oglalla Sioux nation flew in to help contain the forest fire.
7. The chief prosecutor in the James Earl Ray case says it is "more than unlikely" that there was a conspiracy to assassinate the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968.