

OF WORDS: **People do Things***

Passive voice: Emphasizes the recipient of the action. Ex. Homes were lost, good-paying jobs dwindled, funding cuts sent students into debt.

Active voice: Emphasizes the **doer** of the action. Ex. Corrupt bankers took your homes, the CEO chose to cut jobs to increase short-term profits for shareholders, lawmakers' choices send students into debt.

“ When we do not make it clear from the outset that a problem is **person-made**, it is cognitively inconsistent to believe that it could be **person-fixed**.

- Anat Shenker-Osorio

Putting this into practice

When we leave the “doers” out of our advocacy writing, we let them off the hook and our solutions make less sense. Passive voice suggests we do not know or do not want to express who performed the action. Switching to the active voice will make our writing clearer and also easier to read.

Review letters, calls to action, website copy, etc. to make sure we are naming the source of the problem as specifically as possible.

* These insights are from Anat Shenker-Osorio's “Strategic Messaging” video course available at resistanceschool.com.