

WHEN CAN WE USE THE PASSIVE VOICE?

USE THE PASSIVE VOICE WHEN WE DON'T KNOW WHO DID THE ACTION

A laptop **was stolen** from the classroom.

Three people **have been killed** in the park. The identity of the murderer is still unknown.

USE THE PASSIVE VOICE WHEN THE PERSON WHO DOES THE ACTION IS "PEOPLE IN GENERAL"

Tino's **is considered** the city's best pizzeria.

Chinese **is seen** as a very difficult language to learn.

It **was** once **believed** that the sun revolved around the earth.

USE THE PASSIVE VOICE WHEN THE PERSON WHO DOES THE ACTION IS OBVIOUS OR UNIMPORTANT

She **is being treated** for cancer. *(by doctors and nurses, obviously)*

Bill Clinton **was elected** president in 1993. *(by the country's population, obviously)*

All articles **are proofread** before publication. *(probably by a team of editors)*

USE THE PASSIVE VOICE WHEN WE WANT TO GIVE MORE EMPHASIS TO THE RECEIVER OF THE ACTION THAN TO THE DOER

Sometimes we *do* want to mention who did the action, because it is interesting or important in some way... but we still want to keep the *primary* focus of attention on the object of the action:

The Taj Mahal **was built** by the emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his wife.

(we are learning primarily about the Taj Mahal, so we keep the attention on it)

My mother **is being treated** for cancer by one of the best doctors in the country.

(the most important person in this sentence is my mother, not the doctor)

This software **has been used** by more than 50,000 small businesses.

(we want to emphasize how great the software is; the small businesses are a secondary detail)

Someone has done it – turn the sentences into passive ones

Someone has stolen my bag.

Someone has offered me a cup of tea.

Someone has proposed me to **join** the meeting.

Someone told me to stay put.

Someone will give you all the necessary details.

Someone will give you the answer tomorrow.

Someone had told me not to come.

Someone gave me the wrong number.

Someone sent me a bunch of roses.

Someone has given her a pay rise.

Someone asked you to work late.