When do I use the passive?

1 Tick the correct sentence in each pair.

1 a Many people have been died because of this disease.
  b Many people have died because of this disease.
2 a This data took from 1982 and 1992.
  b This data was taken from 1982 and 1992.

With active verbs we usually use the following order: subject + verb + object. We use the passive when we want to put the object of the verb first: object + verb. Compare:
*The **teacher told the students** to close their books.* = active (subject + verb + object)
*The **students were told** to close their books.* = passive (object + verb)

We use the passive:

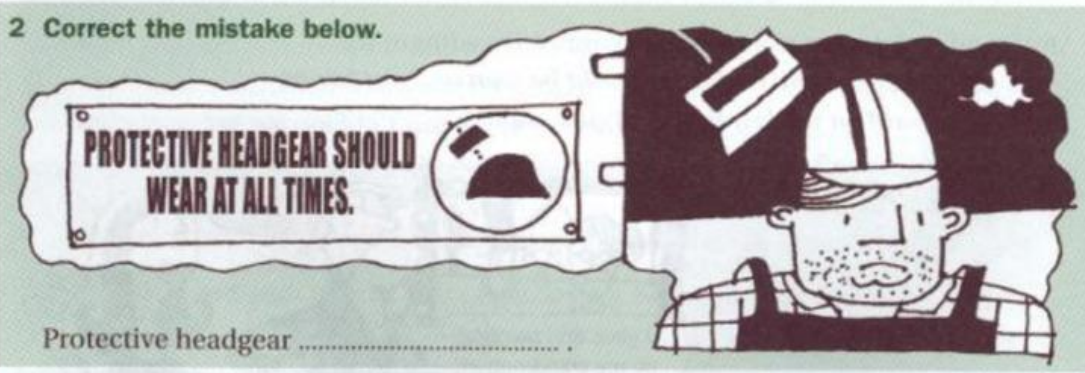
- when we want to make the object the focus of the sentence: ***The books were sold** for a small profit at the school.* (the focus is on the books, not the person selling them)

☆ Note that the verb (*were*) agrees with the object (*the books*).

- when the context tells us who carried out the action: ***A law was introduced** to help protect people in this situation.* (we know that the government did this)
- when it is not important who carried out the action: *In the factory, **the shoes are cleaned** and **packed** into boxes ready for sale.* (we do not need to know who does this)

☆ Note that we can include the 'subject' by adding *by* + the person/group: *A lot of waste materials could be recycled **by large manufacturers**.*

2 Correct the mistake below.



Protective headgear ..... .

3 Change the following sentences from active to passive. You will not need to change the tense. You will need to decide when to leave out the subject.

1 A factory worker checks each box for quality. *Each box* .....
2 The government does not permit children under 16 to work. *Children* .....
3 The washing machine is washing your clothes at the moment. *Your clothes* .....
4 A mechanic will repair your car this afternoon. *Your car* .....
5 The agent has sold our house at last. *Our house* .....
6 Something tore the back of my coat. *The back of my coat* .....
7 The employer pays the staff more for working at the weekend. *The staff* .....
8 Burning tyres give off highly toxic chemicals. *Highly toxic chemicals* .....

LIVEWORKSHEETS