

ACTIVE

A TRUCK DRIVER STRUCK AND KILLED A PERSON ON A BIKE.

INTENTIONALLY OR

PASSIVE

A CYCLIST WAS STRUCK BY A TRUCK & DIED.

SOMETIMES, YOU DON'T KNOW THE ACTOR, SO YOU HAVE TO KEEP IT VAGUE. BUT OFTEN, PASSIVE VOICE OBSCURES RESPONSIBILITY.

ACTIVE

I MADE MISTAKES?

DIFFERENT THAN

PASSIVE

MISTAKES WERE MADE

PASSIVE VOICE IS A GRAMMATICAL STYLE WHERE WRITERS OBSCURE OR DIMINISH THE ACTOR IN A SENTENCE. HOW IS...

A LIFE-AND-DEATH GRAMMAR LESSON

PASSIVE VOICE IS FOR COMARDS

THERE WAS AN OFFICER INVOLVED IN SHOOTING...

A POLICE OFFICER SHOT A MAN.

THE LANGUAGE WE USE MATTERS. OUR WORD CHOICE SHAPES THE WAY WE SEE THE WORLD - AND WHO TAKES ACTION IN IT.

JOURNALISTS HAVE A BAD HABIT OF USING PASSIVE VOICE WHEN THEY FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE NAMING A PERPETRATOR.

ACTIVE

U.S. DRONE STRIKE KILLS 60 PEOPLE

OOO... I'M GONNA GET AN ANGRY PHONE CALL.



PASSIVE

LET'S REVERSE.

60 PEOPLE WERE KILLED BY DRONE STRIKE

NOWHERE IS PASSIVE VOICE MORE WIDESPREAD AND INSIDIOUS THAN IN OUR LANGUAGE AROUND POLICE.

OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT TERMS COMBINE WITH PASSIVE VOICE TO OBSCURE THE PEOPLE WHO COMMIT VIOLENCE.



"MAN WHO DIED DURING ARREST"... WHO KILLED HIM?

WHO FIRED THEM? AND, AGAIN, WHO KILLED THE MAN?



THIS CONVOLUTED TWEET PLACES THE RESPONSIBILITY ON... UH... "AN OFFICER'S KNEE"?

POLICE OFFICERS DON'T HURT PEOPLE - THEY'RE "INVOLVED IN USE-OF-FORCE INCIDENTS."