NOMINALISATION AND NOUN PHRASES

Why is this sentence ambiguous?

We visited their country house.

Why might the following be ambiguous?

A small business loan

A green apple pie

A fresh cheese cake

Consider the following sentences. Do any of them sound odd? Why?

The book is on the table in the corner.

The book is on the corner table.

The girl in the corner is reading the book .

The corner girl is reading the book.

Which of the following three sentences 'doesn't work'? Why?

The lab instrument doesn't work.

The lab technician doesn't work.

The lab professor doesn't work.

Make two-word noun + noun combinations for each of the following:

The lens of the binoculars _____

The leg of the trousers _____

The race to obtain arms _____

A piece of news (from TV, radio or newpapers) _____

The blade of the scissors _____

An epidemic of mumps _____

How are the following pairs of sentences different?

a heavy metal detector / a heavy-metal detector

a man eating shark / a man-eating shark

a French language film / a French-language film

a little appreciated book / a little-appreciated book

Which of the following is more natural? Or are both options acceptable?

books for children / children's books

Parkinson disease /Parkinson's disease

for the sake of convenience / for convenience' sake

in ten years' time / ten years from now

Jon and Cathy's dogs / Jon's and Cathy's dogs

The name of the President of the European Central Bank / the European Central Bank President's name

Compare the following pairs of sentences. What is the main difference between them?

Researchers have to judge **how valid and reliable the web sites are**.	Researchers have to judge **the validity and reliability of the web sites**.
How the babies moved their limbs was tracked by sensors.	**The movement of the babies' limbs** was tracked by sensors.
Results suggest **that students use the WWW widely**.	Results suggest **widespread use of the WWW by students**.
It is now possible **to mass produce pure human antibodies**.	**The mass production of pure human antibodies** is now possible.
Women have a weaker immune response to allergens with each successive pregnancy.	**Women's immune response to allergens** weakens with each successive pregnancy.

Task 1: Rewrite the following sentences to make them more academic.

1. The test aimed to prove how playable the game was.
2. The blades were extremely sharp and this made them highly effective weapons
3. There was a clear pattern to how participants self-assessed their performance.
4. The map shows where the new areas of forestry are.
5. This study clearly demonstrates that diet greatly influences toddlers' behaviour.

Noun Phrases

Nouns are PREMODIFIED in 3 ways:

1. ATTRIBUTIVE ADJECTIVE (a special project, an internal memo, a difficult choice, a certain something, a reasonable request)
2. PARTICIPIAL ADJECTIVE (an interesting theory, a staggering figure, a monitoring device, hidden costs)
3. NOUN PREMODIFIER (bus strike, police report, business district, Liverpool Street station, school evacuation procedures, World Health Organisation, hurricane protection system)

Nouns are POSTMODIFIED in 2 ways:

1. WITH A CLAUSE

ADJECTIVE CLAUSE • the circumstances **that led up to his dismissal** • the support **[that/which] we received** was phenomenal
-ING (PRESENT PARTICIPLE) CLAUSE • the man **standing next to Dr. Smith …** • a lion **devouring its prey …**
-ED (PAST PARTICIPLE) CLAUSE • the building **situated on the corner** • the candidate **chosen for the job …**
"TO" CLAUSE • the person **to see…** • the thing **to do …**

2. WITH A PHRASE

APPOSITIVE NOUN PHRASE The Chancellor of the Exchequer**, Mr. George Osborne …** The seat of parliament**, the Palace of Westminster …**
PREPOSITIONAL NOUN PHRASE a list **of requirements** their demand **for better working conditions**

Task 2: Construct one noun phrase using each of the above pre- and post-modification mechanisms.

1. Attributive adjective:_____
2. Participial adjective: _____
3. Noun premodifier: _____
4. Adjective clause: _____
5. -ing clause: _____
6. -ed clause: _____
7. "to" clause: _____
8. Appositive noun phrase: _____
9. Prepositional noun phrase: _____

NOTE:
Most formal writing will include a mix of these patterns but NOUN PREMODIFICATION and PHRASAL-PREPOSITIONAL POSTMODIFICATION are particularly prevalent in academic writing, where a 'compressed' style designed to communicate large amounts of information efficiently and economically is essential.

Task 3: Compress the following noun phrases (all post modified with adjective clauses) to make them more formal and academic-sounding.

1. people who create web pages
2. treatments that are based on antibodies
3. people who are infected with HIV
4. a part of the course that must be completed
5. Data that have been released recently
6. Research that has been done recently
7. Plants that are grown in this manner
8. The fossils that have been newly unearthed
9. Some of the radio stations that broadcast on shortwave
10. Researchers who know a lot about the subject
11. Children who speak two languages
12. A company that is run by the state
13. The research that has been reported here

Tasks 1 and 3 from https://www.llas.ac.uk//materialsbank/mb063/eap/05/vs70402.htm

NOTE:
Of course, you don't have to avoid adjective clauses completely as a means of noun post-modification. You do need variety in your writing as well.

Task 4: Underline all the noun phrases in the following text.

Autonomous learning has been defined as 'the ability to take charge of one's own learning' and it is associated with students taking a more active role in the learning process (Holec, 1981). The autonomous learner is viewed as an 'independent, self-directed life-long learner' (Betts, 2004). These students, therefore, do not confine themselves to the material being taught, but rather take an active role in seeking and processing information and developing transfer skills to apply information in a broader context for their own needs or interests (Chan, 2003). For the purpose of defining someone as educated, they must be able to incorporate new information with old, actively engaging in the process of learning, rather than simply learning content (Barr and Tag, 1995; Cross, 1999; Greene, 1988; Howell, 2002, 2006). Suggested modes of promoting learner autonomy include tiered assignments (with one assignment building on the foundation of the previous), flexible groupings (which allows for students to pick and choose within assignments) (Betts, 2004), and problem-based learning (students are given the opportunity to engage in independent problem solving) (Van Den Hurk, 2006). The education process should be viewed as a long-term aptitude development effort that seeks to foster personal preparedness for later stages of life (Jimenez Raya and Perez Fernandez, 2002). Therefore, it is important to identify methodological/pedagogical frameworks that foster the development of learner autonomy.

Text from: http://aeo.sllf.qmul.ac.uk/Files/NounPhrases/Noun%20Phrases.html

REFERENCE AND PRACTICE …

Other features of formal academic writing style

- ✓ http://www.uefap.com/writing/feature/complex.htm

Use of the passive

- ✓ http://www.uefap.com/writing/exercise/feature/pasex2.htm
- ✓ http://www.uefap.com/writing/exercise/feature/pasex3.htm

Noun pre-modification

- ✓ http://www.technicalauthoring.com/wiki/index.php/Noun_premodification

Noun modifiers

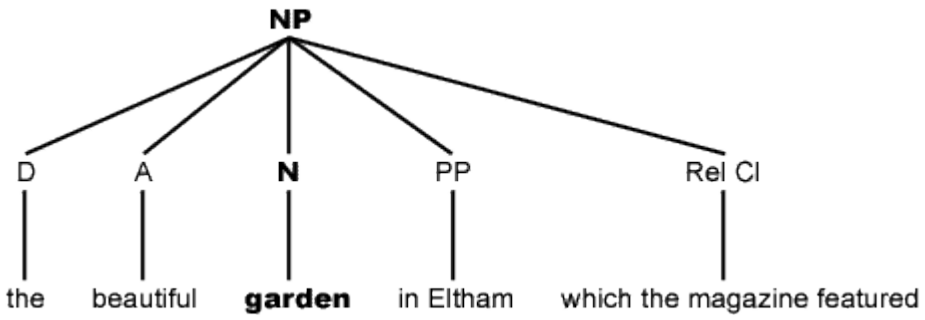
- ✓ http://www.grammar-quizzes.com/adj_nounmodifiers.html

Compound adjectives

- ✓ http://www.grammar.cl/english/compound-adjectives.htm

Possessives

- ✓ https://awc.ashford.edu/grammar-pos-possessives.html
- ✓ http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/possessives.htm
- ✓ http://expertedge.aje.com/2013/07/30/editing-tip-of-the-week-apostrophe-usage-in-academic-writing/



HOMEWORK

1. **WRITE** a paragraph about a piece of research you are currently working on for a non-specialist. Include background information, and state the aims of the research. Think about your use of nouns and noun phrases as you write.

Don't forget … the SEVEN STAGES of the WRITING PROCESS

PLANNING	DRAFTING	REVISING
1. Choose a topic	4. Write the first draft	5. Edit and revise
2. Generate ideas		6. Proofread
3. Create an outline		**7.** Submit