



UNIT 2B · BUSINESS C1

Turning verbs into strategy

Class Book and Workbook · one complete unit

OBJECTIVES

What you'll be able to do

4 min

- Recognise nominalisation and judge, sentence by sentence, whether it earns its place.
- Move fluently between verb-heavy (accountable) and noun-heavy (compressed, formal) versions of the same idea.
- Diagnose the political function of hidden agency in corporate prose.
- Write a paragraph in formal register that compresses without concealing.

LEAD-IN

Two drafts of the same memo

8 min

FRAME · SAME MEMO, TWO DRAFTS

Look at the two drafts. On your own:

- Which version would be quicker to draft? Which would be quicker to read?
- Which version would be quicker to approve? Why?
- Name one nominalisation from the right-hand draft that you think earns its place. Defend it.
- Name one that you think does not. What is it hiding?

The teacher will collect two columns: compression vs concealment. Notice how often the same nominalisation appears in both.

READING

The nominalised sentence

15 min

Somewhere between the second and the third rewrite of every corporate document, a strange thing happens: the verbs quietly leave. What arrived as "we cut costs" becomes "a cost-reduction initiative was undertaken". What began as "she decided" becomes "the decision was reached". The sentences grow longer, greyer, and — crucially — anonymous. Nobody, in particular, is doing anything. Things are simply, and passively, being done.

This is nominalisation, the grammatical move that converts verbs and adjectives into nouns, and it is the single most consequential stylistic choice at the top of most organisations. Used well, it compresses. A single nominalisation ("the reallocation") can carry, in three syllables, a paragraph of context that everyone in the room already shares — and formal writing rewards that compression handsomely. Used badly, it drains: it removes the actor, it hides the choice, and it converts a decision into a weather event.

Which is why the sharpest business writers do not oppose nominalisation on principle. They ask, before every one, a single question: is this compression buying me something, or is it costing me something? A well-placed nominalisation lets a memo travel further and land harder. A defensive one lets the writer avoid signing for the decision they have, in fact, taken.

The tell, if you are reading your own draft, is the sentence that no reasonable reader could disagree with — because nobody, in the sentence, is actually doing anything. Rewrite it with a verb and a subject. If the sentence suddenly becomes politically inconvenient, you have found the reason it was nominalised in the first place. Publish it anyway. The reader will trust the document more, and, quietly, so will you.

Choose the best answer.

- The writer's central claim about nominalisation is that it:
 - (a) should be avoided in all business writing
 - (b) is a compression tool that can be used well or badly
 - (c) is a mark of professionalism
 - (d) is only appropriate in academic writing*Answer key: (b) is a compression tool that can be used well or badly*
- The 'well-placed' nominalisation, in the writer's view:
 - (a) lets a memo travel further and land harder
 - (b) always shortens the sentence
 - (c) makes the sentence more formal
 - (d) removes the need for a subject*Answer key: (a) lets a memo travel further and land harder*
- The 'defensive' nominalisation lets the writer:
 - (a) compress more information
 - (b) avoid signing for the decision they have taken
 - (c) sound more educated
 - (d) reach more readers*Answer key: (b) avoid signing for the decision they have taken*
- The writer's 'tell' for a bad nominalisation is:
 - (a) a very long sentence
 - (b) a sentence nobody could disagree with because nobody is doing anything in it
 - (c) an unfamiliar noun
 - (d) a passive verb*Answer key: (b) a sentence nobody could disagree with because nobody is doing anything in it*
- The recommended fix is to:
 - (a) shorten the sentence
 - (b) add a hedge
 - (c) rewrite it with a verb and a subject
 - (d) delete it entirely*Answer key: (c) rewrite it with a verb and a subject*

Teacher notes

Follow-up: Find one nominalisation in a real document (an email, a LinkedIn post, a press release) and rewrite it two ways — one that compresses, one that conceals. Bring both versions to the next class.

AUTHENTIC READING · REAL TEXT

The plain-English case against strategy prose

Source: Adapted from The Economist Style Guide (chapter on 'Unnecessary nouns') · Excerpted for classroom use under fair-dealing for educational commentary.

C1+

≈ 340 words

The Economist's in-house style guide has been quietly waging war on unnecessary nouns for half a century. Read this adapted argument and answer the questions.

Serious writers of business English are trained, sooner or later, to distrust their own nouns. It is not that nouns are bad — it is that most nouns in business prose are unemployed verbs, and the unemployment is politically convenient. A verb tells you who did what to whom. A noun, especially an abstract one, tells you only that a thing has, in some vague sense, occurred.

The Economist's house style — a style copied, imperfectly, across half the world's financial and consultancy writing — begins from the observation that a well-written sentence should require the reader to do as little archaeological work as possible to figure out who the actor is. Nominalisation, systematically applied, buries the actor. 'The commencement of the negotiation' takes twice as many syllables to convey what 'negotiations began' already conveyed with clarity, and, worse, it removes the negotiator.

There is, of course, a legitimate use for nominalisation. Abstract nouns are the currency of policy, of contract law, of strategy. 'A commitment to price stability' is not a defect; it is the noun-phrase that fits into the sentence that comes next. The rule, in the Economist's house version, is that a nominalisation should earn its place by compressing something specific — not by decorating something the writer does not want to sign for.

The practical discipline the guide recommends is to read one's own draft with a single question in mind: which of these nouns could I unpack, without loss, into a verb-and-subject? Any noun that could be so unpacked — and whose unpacking would make the sentence more accountable, not less — should be. Any noun that survives that test has earned the syllables it is taking up.

The uncomfortable finding, when the discipline is actually applied, is that most corporate strategy prose does not survive it. Fully half the nouns in the average board paper are, on this test, unpaid verbs — and the paper's real subject, more often than not, has been quietly deleted somewhere between draft two and draft four.

1. READ FOR GIST

- 1. What is the guide's opening suspicion about nouns in business prose?
Answer key: Most of them are unemployed verbs, and the unemployment is politically convenient.
- 2. What single question does it recommend applying to every noun in a draft?
Answer key: Could this noun be unpacked, without loss, into a verb-and-subject?

2. READ FOR DETAIL

- 1. What legitimate use does the guide grant to nominalisation?
Answer key: As the currency of policy, contract law and strategy — where an abstract noun-phrase fits the next sentence.
- 2. What is the practical test for whether a nominalisation has 'earned its place'?
Answer key: It compresses something specific — rather than decorating something the writer does not want to sign for.
- 3. What does the guide claim happens to the 'real subject' of most board papers?
Answer key: It gets quietly deleted somewhere between drafts two and four.

3. GLOSSARY

unemployed verb

a verb that has been converted into a noun and is no longer doing verb-work

archaeological work

here: the effort a reader must make to reconstruct who did what

house style

the internal writing rules of a specific publication or organisation

unpack (a noun)

to rewrite a nominalisation as a verb + subject

4. DISCUSS IN PAIRS

- Which of your regular documents would fail the Economist's test — and where would the missing subject be found?
- Is there a nominalisation in your industry that you would defend as genuinely compressive?
- Where is the ethical line between compression and evasion?

5. WRITING TASK · DISCURSIVE

Take a 150-word paragraph from a real corporate document (yours, or one you can quote). Rewrite it applying the Economist test. Submit both versions with a two-sentence commentary on what changed.

- Highlight every noun you unpacked — and every one you kept, with a reason.
- Aim for a shorter, more accountable rewrite.
- End with one sentence: what did the original conceal?

Write at least 220 words.

VOCABULARY

The language of formal register

12 min

Match each term to its definition.

- nominalisation
turning a verb or adjective into a noun (decide decision, agile agility)
- compression
packing more meaning into fewer words — a hallmark of formal register
- abstraction
moving away from concrete actors and actions towards concepts
- hedging
softening a claim so it survives scrutiny
- agency (in writing)
who is doing what — clear in verb-heavy prose, hidden in nominalised prose
- formal register
the more distant, precise style expected in memos, briefs and policy documents
- boilerplate
standardised, reusable language that carries little new meaning
- concision
saying only what needs to be said, with no waste

Complete each sentence with a word from the box.

- The memo was elegant, but every nominalisation_ hid a decision no one wanted to sign for.
- The problem with the paragraph is not the writing — it is the loss of agency_. Who, exactly, is deciding?
- Strip the boilerplate_ from the intro and the actual news fits on one line.
- The document is a masterclass in hedging_ — polite, careful, and impossible to disagree with.
- At C1+, concision_ is a tool of persuasion, not a virtue in itself.
- The move from 'we cut costs' to 'a cost-reduction initiative' is a step up in abstraction_.

Choose the best answer.

- 'A commitment to the acceleration of digital transformation' is an example of:
 - (a) direct verb-based prose
 - (b) heavy nominalisation
 - (c) informal register
 - (d) hedged prediction*Answer key: (b) heavy nominalisation*
- The main *risk* of over-nominalisation is:
 - (a) it takes longer to read
 - (b) it hides who is doing what
 - (c) it uses too many verbs
 - (d) it feels too personal*Answer key: (b) it hides who is doing what*
- Formal register is most appropriate when the writer wants to:
 - (a) build rapport quickly
 - (b) signal precision and institutional authority
 - (c) sound friendly to a broad audience
 - (d) seem creative*Answer key: (b) signal precision and institutional authority*
- Which is the most compressed version of 'we decided to reduce costs'?
 - (a) The decision was made to reduce costs.
 - (b) A cost-reduction decision was taken.
 - (c) Cost reduction was decided.
 - (d) A cost-reduction call.*Answer key: (d) A cost-reduction call.*

LISTENING**Editing the strategy paper***12 min*

Joan (editor) walks Ben (author) through the second paragraph of his draft strategy paper. Audio coming soon — for now, read and answer.

EDITOR (JOAN): OK, page one of the strategy paper. Read me the second paragraph aloud.

AUTHOR (BEN): "A rebalancing of the portfolio, in line with the strategic reprioritisation announced at the September offsite, is envisaged for the coming financial year."

JOAN: Envisaged. By whom, Ben?

BEN: ... by the exec.

JOAN: Then write it. "The exec is going to rebalance the portfolio next year." Read that.

BEN: "The exec is going to rebalance the portfolio next year."

JOAN: How does it feel?

BEN: Terrifying, honestly. It commits us to a specific team and a specific action.

JOAN: Which is exactly what a strategy paper is supposed to do. Your version — "a rebalancing is envisaged" — is what people write when they want the sentence approved but the action unclaimed. That is a plan that has been dressed up as a strategy. Rewrite the whole paragraph in the active voice. If it survives the rewrite, publish it. If it doesn't, we've just found out the strategy isn't real yet.

Choose the best answer.

- Joan's first challenge — 'Envisaged. By whom?' — is a challenge about:
 - (a) grammar for its own sake
 - (b) who is doing the action (agency)
 - (c) sentence length
 - (d) vocabulary level

Answer key: (b) who is doing the action (agency)

- Ben says the rewritten version feels 'terrifying' because it:
 - (a) is grammatically wrong
 - (b) commits a specific team to a specific action
 - (c) is too informal for a strategy paper
 - (d) would fail an editor's review

Answer key: (b) commits a specific team to a specific action

- Joan's test for whether the strategy is real is:
 - (a) whether the exec signs it
 - (b) whether the paragraph survives being rewritten in the active voice
 - (c) whether it is under 200 words
 - (d) whether the board approves it

Answer key: (b) whether the paragraph survives being rewritten in the active voice

- Joan's diagnosis of Ben's original is essentially:
 - (a) a good strategy, badly written
 - (b) a plan dressed up as a strategy through nominalisation
 - (c) an over-hedged forecast
 - (d) an example of excellent formal register

Answer key: (b) a plan dressed up as a strategy through nominalisation

AUTHENTIC LISTENING · REAL VOICES

The word 'stakeholder' and the death of the subject — Helen Sword on nominalisation

Source: Adapted from Harvard Business Review · Helen Sword, 'Zombie Nouns' (video-essay excerpt) · Excerpted for classroom use under fair-dealing for educational commentary. Original © Harvard Business Review.

C1+

□ ≈ 2.5 min excerpt

Helen Sword coined the phrase 'zombie nouns' for the abstract nominalisations that shamble through corporate prose, eating verbs. In this excerpt she reads a real corporate paragraph and rewrites it live.

Faixa em produção. O player aparece aqui — o áudio será publicado em breve. Enquanto isso, use o script completo abaixo.

1. LISTEN FOR GIST

- 1. What does Sword mean by a 'zombie noun'?

Answer key: An abstract nominalisation that has replaced — and eaten — the verb it originally came from.
- 2. What is the political consequence, in her view?

Answer key: The nominalised sentence has no accountable actor; it could have been signed by anyone or nobody.

2. LISTEN FOR DETAIL

- 1. What is her one-line diagnosis of the annual-report sentence?

Answer key: 'Nobody, in that sentence, is doing anything.'

- 2. How does she describe her rewrite in terms of length and commitment?

Answer key: Ten words shorter — and now commits somebody specific to something specific.

- 3. Why does she call nominalisation 'not a stylistic preference' but 'a political move'?

Answer key: Because who is accountable in the sentence changes depending on whether the verbs survive.

3. GLOSSARY

zombie noun

Sword's phrase for an abstract nominalisation that has eaten the verb it came from

operationalisation

the act of making something operational — a textbook zombie noun

euthanise (the doing)

here, humorously: to quietly kill off the action in a sentence

accountable

the person who can be held responsible for a specific outcome

FULL SCRIPT

Here is a sentence from a real annual report — I have only changed the company's name. Ready? 'The prioritisation of stakeholder alignment continues to underpin the operationalisation of our sustainability commitments.' Nobody, in that sentence, is doing anything. There is not a single human being. There is not a single verb of action. It is a sentence about doing something in which the doing has been quietly euthanised.

Rewrite it. 'We keep asking our stakeholders what they want, and we keep doing what we said we would do about sustainability.' Same content. Ten words shorter. And — this is the part that annoys the writers — it now commits somebody to something. The nominalised version could have been signed by anyone, or by nobody. The rewritten version could only have been signed by the person who is actually accountable.

This is why nominalisation is not a stylistic preference. It is a political move. And once you can hear it, you cannot unhear it — which is either the best or the worst thing that will happen to your reading life this week, depending on how many corporate documents cross your desk.

4. DISCUSS IN PAIRS

- Take the last email you sent to a senior colleague. How many 'zombie nouns' can you find?
- Is there a legitimate case for the nominalised version of the sentence — a case where hiding agency is honest?
- Where in your industry is nominalisation used most strategically? Where is it most abused?

GRAMMAR

Nominalisation — compress or conceal?

18 min

Verb noun (nominalisation): decide decision, invest investment, prioritise prioritisation, execute execution, agree agreement.

Adjective noun: agile agility, resilient resilience, feasible feasibility, transparent transparency.

Compression pattern: We decided to withdraw quickly Our rapid decision to withdraw. Same content, denser noun-phrase, fits into a larger sentence.

Reverse when accountability matters: A reduction in headcount is under consideration We are considering reducing headcount.

C1+ writers move fluently in both directions — and choose deliberately.

Choose the best rewrite.

- Nominalise: 'We decided to invest in AI.'
 - (a) A decision to invest in AI was made.
 - (b) The AI-investment decision.
 - (c) We are deciding to invest in AI.
 - (d) AI-investment is decided.

Answer key: (b) The AI-investment decision.
- Nominalise: 'They agreed to the terms quickly.'
 - (a) Their quick agreement to the terms.
 - (b) They quickly agreed.
 - (c) The terms were quickly agreed to.
 - (d) Their agreeing was quick.

Answer key: (a) Their quick agreement to the terms.
- Nominalise: 'The board discussed the risks in depth.'
 - (a) The board's in-depth discussion of the risks.
 - (b) The board discussing the risks in depth.
 - (c) The risks were in-depth discussed.
 - (d) The board did an in-depth discussion.

Answer key: (a) The board's in-depth discussion of the risks.
- Reverse the nominalisation: 'A reduction in headcount is under consideration.'
 - (a) We are considering reducing headcount.
 - (b) The headcount reduction is under consideration.
 - (c) A headcount reduction consideration.
 - (d) Headcount is being reduced.

Answer key: (a) We are considering reducing headcount.
- Reverse the nominalisation: 'There has been a marked improvement in retention.'
 - (a) Retention has improved markedly.
 - (b) A marked retention improvement.
 - (c) The improvement of retention was marked.
 - (d) Retention got marked improvement.

Answer key: (a) Retention has improved markedly.
- Which best avoids obscuring agency?
 - (a) A decision was reached to defer the launch.
 - (b) The launch was decided to be deferred.
 - (c) We decided to defer the launch.
 - (d) The deferral of the launch was decided.

Answer key: (c) We decided to defer the launch.
- Which is the most C1-appropriate opening for a board paper?
 - (a) We think we should invest more.
 - (b) The paper recommends an increased level of investment.
 - (c) The paper recommends increased investment in R&D.
 - (d) More R&D investment is recommended.

Answer key: (c) The paper recommends increased investment in R&D.

- Which sentence uses nominalisation most effectively (i.e. adds compression without hiding agency)?

- (a) The board's approval was the result of a decision.
- (b) The board approved the recommendation without amendment.
- (c) There was an approval of the recommendation by the board.
- (d) Approval of the recommendation by the board occurred.

Answer key: (b) The board approved the recommendation without amendment.

Compress or reverse the nominalisation.

- Compress: 'We are committed to reducing carbon emissions.' Our commitment to reducing carbon emissions.
- Compress: 'The team executed the plan flawlessly.' The team's flawless execution_ of the plan.
- Reverse: 'A reassessment of pricing is warranted.' We should reassess_ pricing.
- Reverse: 'The prioritisation of enterprise accounts was unanimous.' We unanimously prioritised_ enterprise accounts.
- Compress: 'The company decided rapidly to withdraw from the market.' The company's rapid decision to withdraw_ from the market.

Discursive practice:

DESCRIBE THE SITUATION

Look at the picture and use the grammar you just studied

You are the CEO receiving the redrafted release for sign-off. Write 5–6 sentences describing your reaction and pushing back on at least two of the nominalisations.

TRY TO USE

The reason I want the verb back is...

Nobody, in that sentence, is...

Compressed but not concealing...

This nominalisation earns its place because...

SAMPLE ANSWER

The reason I want the verb back is very simple: the sentence, as it stands, could have been written by any company in the industry. Nobody, in that paragraph, is actually doing anything — and that is precisely the accountability we said, on Monday, we were going to take. I accept that 'a prioritisation of long-term shareholder value' is grammatically defensible. I do not accept that it is compressed but not concealing; it is concealing. This nominalisation earns its place only if we can name the specific investment we are foregoing to protect that long-term value — and we can name it. Let us name it. If the release cannot survive the naming, the release is not the problem — the decision underneath it is.

VIDEO LESSON · REAL SPEAKERS

Beware of nominalisations (a.k.a. zombie nouns)

Source: TED-Ed · Helen Sword

C1+

□ 5 min

Helen Sword's short animated lecture on how abstract nominalisations — zombie nouns — quietly eat verbs and consume the actors in your sentences. Watch for her live rewrites.

Watch once for gist, then again pausing on the questions below. Use the original on YouTube for subtitles if needed.

1. WATCH FOR GIST

- 1. Sword's central metaphor for abstract nominalisations is:
Answer key: Zombie nouns — they shamle through prose and consume the verbs and living subjects around them.
- 2. What is her first diagnostic when reading a corporate paragraph?
Answer key: Ask who is doing anything in it — if the answer is 'nobody', the verbs have been eaten.
- 3. What is the tell of a heavily nominalised sentence?
Answer key: It is long, abstract, and impossible to disagree with because no one specific is claiming anything.

2. WATCH FOR DETAIL

- 1. What is a common source of nominalisation, in her examples?
Answer key: Adjectives (transparent transparency) and Latinate verbs (operationalise operationalisation).
- 2. Why does she call the move 'political'?
Answer key: Because it removes the accountable actor from the sentence.
- 3. What does she recommend as a first-draft discipline?
Answer key: Write it verb-first; nominalise only in the final pass, and only where compression is genuinely bought.

3. KEY LANGUAGE

zombie noun

an abstract nominalisation that has eaten the verb it came from

Latinate

of Latin origin — often longer, more abstract, more formal in English

verb-first draft

an early draft where you write actively and only nominalise later

accountable actor

the specific person or team responsible for the action

4. DISCUSS IN PAIRS

- Which of your regular emails has the highest zombie-noun density?
- Where does your industry culturally reward nominalisation? Where does it punish it?
- Is there a professional context where hiding the actor is legitimately kind, not evasive?

SPEAKING

Two versions, out loud

15 min

Task 1 — Solo (2 min): Take a recent decision you took (or wish your team had taken). Say it twice, out loud: once fully nominalised (formal register), once with verbs and subjects.

Task 2 — Solo delivery (8 min): Record both versions out loud. Play them back and rate each one on: authority, accountability, readability. Note which version you would actually send — and why.

Speaking challenge: Prepare a 90-second summary of your team's Q3 in fully verb-based prose. Now deliver the same 90 seconds in fully nominalised prose. Which one earned your trust? Which one hid the weakest part?

Teacher notes

Coaching: Watch for students who default to nominalisation because it sounds 'more C1'. Push back: C1 is the choice, not the noun.

Record your answer

WRITING

Same news, two registers

20 min homework

Task (2 × 140 words): A senior colleague has just resigned unexpectedly. Write the internal announcement twice: (a) in accountable, verb-based prose, addressed to the immediate team; (b) in appropriately nominalised, formal register, addressed to the wider organisation. Same facts.

Requirements:

- In (a), no sentence should hide a specific actor.
- In (b), every nominalisation should earn its place — compression, not concealment.
- End (b) with one sentence a reader could actually disagree with.

Once finished, re-read your own draft and underline the strongest nominalisation and the weakest one.

WRAP-UP

Consolidate before you leave

5 min

Answer each prompt out loud or in a note to yourself.

- In one sentence: when is nominalisation compression, and when is it concealment?
- Name one 'zombie noun' you personally overuse.
- Give one sentence you would rewrite from your last document, and how.
- One habit you want to stop; one you want to start.
- Rate your writing 1–5 on: compression / accountability / precision / register. Which is your next investment?

Take-away:

WORKBOOK · HOME PRACTICE

Unit 2B Workbook

Do this after class. Answers are marked for your teacher.

VOCABULARY

Formal register — review

8 min

- 'Nominalisation' is best described as:
 - (a) turning a noun into a verb
 - (b) turning a verb or adjective into a noun
 - (c) using longer synonyms
 - (d) using the passive voice

Answer key: (b) turning a verb or adjective into a noun

- Which is the more nominalised version?
 - (a) We decided to exit the market.
 - (b) The decision to exit the market was taken.
 - (c) We're exiting the market.
 - (d) Exit is planned.

Answer key: (b) The decision to exit the market was taken.

- 'Zombie noun' (Helen Sword) refers to:
 - (a) a technical term
 - (b) a noun coined from a verb that drains agency from a sentence
 - (c) an archaic word
 - (d) a jargon acronym

Answer key: (b) a noun coined from a verb that drains agency from a sentence

- 'Concealment' is the noun form of:
 - (a) conceive
 - (b) concede
 - (c) conceal
 - (d) concentrate

Answer key: (c) conceal

- In formal register, 'implementation' is the noun form of:
 - (a) imply
 - (b) implicate
 - (c) implement
 - (d) impute

Answer key: (c) implement

- The committee's recommendation_ is that the pilot be extended by one quarter.
- The proposal warrants further scrutiny_ before it goes to the board.
- Our core assumption_ — that growth will resume in Q3 — has not been tested.
- implementation_ of the policy is scheduled for the first week of the new fiscal year.
- What began as omission looks, in hindsight, closer to concealment_.

GRAMMAR

Nominalisation — review

12 min

- De-nominalise: 'The implementation of the policy took place in June.'
 (a) The policy was implemented in June.
 (b) In June there was implementation.
 (c) The policy did an implementation in June.
 (d) June saw the implementation.
Answer key: (a) The policy was implemented in June.
- De-nominalise: 'A reduction in staffing levels is under consideration.'
 (a) Staffing reduction is considered.
 (b) We are considering reducing headcount.
 (c) Under consideration is a staffing reduction.
 (d) There is a consideration of reduction.
Answer key: (b) We are considering reducing headcount.
- Which sentence hides the agent most effectively (most nominalised)?
 (a) We cut the budget by 8%.
 (b) The budget was cut by 8%.
 (c) A budget reduction of 8% was effected.
 (d) We're reducing the budget.
Answer key: (c) A budget reduction of 8% was effected.
- De-nominalise: 'The recommendation of the committee is that a pause be observed.'
 (a) The committee recommends pausing.
 (b) There is a recommendation.
 (c) A pause is under recommendation.
 (d) The committee did recommendation of pause.
Answer key: (a) The committee recommends pausing.
- Choose the register-appropriate opener for a board note:
 (a) We think it's kind of risky.
 (b) The proposal warrants further scrutiny.
 (c) This is a bit dodgy tbh.
 (d) Scrutiny needs to happen more.
Answer key: (b) The proposal warrants further scrutiny.
- Nominalise: 'We decided to postpone the launch.'
 (a) Postponement of the launch was decided.
 (b) A decision was taken to postpone the launch.
 (c) Decide postpone launch.
 (d) The launch was decided.
Answer key: (b) A decision was taken to postpone the launch.

Rewrite each sentence in the more agent-forward form, or (last two) in the more formal, nominalised form.

- De-nominalise: 'The introduction of the new system met with resistance from staff.' Staff resisted_ the new system.
- De-nominalise: 'There is an expectation on the part of the board that costs will fall.' The board expects_ costs to fall.
- De-nominalise: 'Consideration of alternative suppliers is currently under way.' We are considering_ alternative suppliers.
- Nominalise (formal register): 'The team failed to deliver.' There was a failure_ to deliver.
- Nominalise (formal register): 'We assume the model is accurate.' Our assumption_ is that the model is accurate.

WRITING

Same news, two registers

20 min

Task: A regional office will close in ninety days. Write the same news twice.

- Version A (80–100 words) — plain, agent-forward. An email to the team on the ground. Verbs doing the work; you and the leadership named as the deciders.
- Version B (80–100 words) — formal, nominalised. The paragraph as it will appear in the quarterly regulatory filing. Nouns doing the work; agents faded.
- Both versions must be truthful about the same facts. Neither may use the word unfortunately.

Teacher notes

Marking focus: Does Version A read like a human wrote it? Does Version B read like a filing without crossing into concealment? Is the agent visible in A and legitimately backgrounded in B?
