



Noun Deconstruction

Purpose: Teach students how to analyze the structure of a lengthy noun phrase found in expository text to adequately comprehend the text.

Designed to be used by and with: Students who struggle to comprehend text containing long noun phrases, particularly expository text.

Materials: Content text, highlighters, pencil

Preparation: Determine the sentences in the text students are reading in the content class that include noun phrase expansion. Break down the nouns into the separate ideas before working with students.

Key: **Noun**, **Verb**

Procedure:

1. Introduce a sentence to the students by saying something like, “This is a long sentence from the text we are reading. The sentence contains a lot of ideas packed into one sentence.”

Four guilty verdicts ended a seven-week CIA leak trial that focused new attention on the Bush administration's much-criticized handling of intelligence reports about weapons of mass destruction in the run-up to the Iraq war. (Associated Press, 2007, p. 1A).

2. Provide a think aloud for students as to how to deconstruct, or break down the long noun phrase into its functional components. Use functional guiding questions to do this and mark the sentences with consistent annotation marks.

Overall Sentence Deconstruction

- Who or what is this sentence about? **Four guilty verdicts**
- What's happening? **ended**
- Ended WHAT? **A seven-week CIA leak trial that focused new attention on the Bush administration's much criticized handling of intelligence reports about weapons of mass destruction in the run-up to the Iraq war.**



Deconstruct the Expanded Noun Phrase : Using functional guiding questions, continue to provide a think aloud for students as to how to break down the expanded noun phrase and identify the various modifiers (indicated in this example by parenthesis) that describe the main nouns (these are underlined here). Make explicit how you knew to ask the applicable guiding questions by pointing out, or marking, the linguistic clues. Examples are provided below. Rewrite the condensed modifiers into simple sentences.

(A seven-week) (CIA leak trial) (that focused new attention) (on the Bush administration's much criticized handling of intelligence reports) (about weapons of mass destruction) (in the run-up to the Iraq war.)

- What kind of trial was it?
 - *It was a seven week trial.* (linguistic clue: the words immediately precede the main noun & follows the article “a” indicating a noun is coming)
 - *It was a CIA leak trial.* (linguistic clue: the words immediately precede the main noun)
 - *The trial focused new attention on the Bush administration* (linguistic clue: “that” signals the next words are words that will describe the noun)
 - What’s happening with the Bush administration? (linguistic clue: criticized is a noun that can be a verb – to criticize – indicating a “happening” word)
 - *The Bush administration was criticized for how it handled intelligence reports.*
 - What kind of intelligence reports? (linguistic clue: “about” indicating describing words)
 - *The intelligence reports are about weapons of mass destruction.*
 - When did the intelligence reports happen? (vocabulary clue: “run-up” indicating time)
 - *The intelligence reports happened before the Iraq war.*
3. Point out to students to students how these simple sentences each represent a separate idea. Here, we had 7 different ideas packed into 1 sentence.



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4. Provide students opportunities for guided practice to use the guiding questions to break down new sentences from the content text.

Adapted from: Fang, Z. (2008). Going Beyond the Fab Five: Helping Students Cope With the Unique Linguistic Challenges of Expository Reading In Intermediate Grades. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 51(6), 476-487.