

## Lesson Plan: Complex noun phrases

<b>Level</b>	Advanced (C1–C2)
<b>Time</b>	60–90 minutes
<b>Skills</b>	Grammar, writing
<b>Focus</b>	Pre- and post-modification; embedded clauses; dense noun phrases in written English

### OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Build complex noun phrases using pre-modifiers and post-modifiers
- Use participial phrases, relative clauses, and prepositional phrases as post-modifiers
- Understand how noun phrase complexity contributes to academic register
- Edit complex noun phrases for clarity and precision

### TARGET LANGUAGE (EXAMPLES)

#### *Pre-modification*

- a rapidly expanding global market
- the recently published peer-reviewed study
- a government-funded long-term urban development initiative

#### *Post-modification — prepositional phrase*

- the report on urban migration
- the committee responsible for oversight

#### *Post-modification — participle clause*

- the scientist leading the research team
- the data collected over a 10-year period

#### *Post-modification — relative clause*

- the results, which had been anticipated for months, were inconclusive
- the approach that has proved most effective

#### *Dense noun phrases in academic writing*

- 'The government's controversial decision to impose new restrictions on high-density urban development' = one NP with many layers.
- Too much density → hard to read. Balance is key.

### LESSON PROCEDURE

#### 1. Warm-up (10 min)

**Task:** Students unpack a dense noun phrase: what is the head noun? What are the modifiers?

- 'A widely-cited, peer-reviewed longitudinal study of immigrant populations in post-industrial urban centres' — break it down.

## 2. Presentation (15 min)

**Task:** Head noun + pre-modifiers + post-modifiers with layers.

- Show how pre-modification is typical of journalism; post-modification is typical of academic writing.
- Discuss: at what point does complexity become an obstacle to understanding?

## 3. Guided practice (10 min)

**Task:** Add pre- and post-modifiers to simple noun phrases.

- 'a study' → 'a longitudinal study conducted over two decades on the effects of urbanisation'
- 'the report' → 'the independent report commissioned by the UN Security Council'

## 4. Writing task (25 min)

**Task:** Rewrite a journalistic text using complex noun phrases to increase density.

- Then write an original academic paragraph with at least 5 complex noun phrases.
- Peer review: too complex? Too simple?

## 5. Editing task (10 min)

**Task:** Break up 3 over-complex noun phrases into cleaner sentences.

### EXTENSION / HOMEWORK

Choose one:

1. Expand 8 simple nouns into complex noun phrases with pre- and post-modification.
2. Write an academic paragraph in which every sentence contains a complex noun phrase.
3. Find 5 complex noun phrases in an academic article and analyse their components.