Complex Noun Phrases Worksheet: Pre- and Post-Modification

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NAME

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Remember

Form	Example
Determiner + adverb + adjective + noun modifier + head noun	a highly effective water treatment system
Compound modifiers with hyphens	a five-year-old boy · a well-known writer · a long-term plan
Post-modification with prepositions and participles	a plan to reduce traffic in the centre · people living alone
Plural nouns become singular as modifiers	a ten-minute walk (not ten-minutes)

Typical mistakes

× Learners often say	✓ Say instead
a ten minutes walk	a ten-minute walk
a research about climate change	research on climate change / a study of climate change
the plan of the government for reducing of traffic	the government's plan to reduce traffic

1. Rewrite

Turn each set of information into one noun phrase.

1. a report · it was published recently · the government wrote it · it is about unemployment

2. a boy · he is eight years old

3. a walk · it takes twenty minutes

4. a plan · it is for the long term · it aims to cut emissions

5. people · they live alone · in big cities

6. a system · it treats water · it is very effective

7. a decision · it was taken quickly · it was controversial

8. a study · it lasted ten years · on sleep · in teenagers

2. Choose

Circle the correct option.

1. a (three-hours / three-hour) meeting
2. a (well-known / well known) author (before a noun)
3. a (ten-dollar / ten-dollars) bill
4. (sports / sport's) shoes
5. a (customer service / customers' service) problem
6. people (waiting / waited) for the bus
7. a proposal (to build / of building) a new airport
8. the (last two / two last) chapters

3. Correct the mistakes

Each phrase has one mistake. Write it correctly.

1. a five-years plan
2. a well known in Europe writer
3. the increase of the prices of houses
4. people who they live in rural areas
5. a two-weeks holiday
6. a research about sleep

Writing

Write 5 newspaper headlines or first lines using dense noun phrases, then unpack one of them into three simple sentences.

Speaking

- Describe your job or studies in one long noun phrase.
- Unpack a headline from today's news into simple sentences.
- Describe a product you use every day, using compound adjectives.
- What long-term plans does your city or company have?

Answer key

1. Rewrite: 1 a recently published government report on unemployment · 2 an eight-year-old boy · 3 a twenty-minute walk · 4 a long-term plan to cut emissions · 5 people living alone in big cities · 6 a highly effective water treatment system · 7 a quickly taken, controversial decision / a controversial, hastily taken decision · 8 a ten-year study of sleep in teenagers

2. Choose: 1 three-hour · 2 well-known · 3 ten-dollar · 4 sports · 5 customer service · 6 waiting · 7 to build · 8 last two

3. Correct the mistakes: 1 a five-year plan · 2 a writer well known in Europe · 3 the increase in house prices · 4 people living / who live in rural areas · 5 a two-week holiday · 6 research on sleep / a study of sleep

Writing, model answer: 1. New government-funded study links poor sleep to falling exam results. 2. Record-breaking heatwave forces early closure of city-centre schools. 3. Locally grown organic vegetables now cheaper than supermarket alternatives. 4. Ten-year plan to reduce car traffic in historic centre approved. 5. Award-winning young architect designs low-cost housing project. Unpacked (1): The government has paid for a new study. It shows that students who sleep badly get lower exam results. The results are falling.