

Boost Free Lessons - Year 8 English

Lesson 7: Noun Groups and Verb Choices

Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Worked Example 1

Expand the noun group in the sentence below.

The dog waited by the gate.

1. A **noun group** is the noun plus the words that describe it.
2. Here the noun group is just *The dog*, which gives the reader almost nothing.
3. Expand it by adding adjectives before the noun and a phrase after it.
4. *The old brown dog with one torn ear* creates a picture without adding a new sentence.

Model: The old brown dog with one torn ear waited by the gate.

Worked Example 2

Improve the verb choice in the sentence below.

*She **went** across the room and **took** the letter.*

1. *Went* and *took* are weak verbs. They report the action but not the manner.
2. A precise verb replaces a verb plus an adverb, which makes writing tighter.
3. *Went* could become *marched*, *drifted*, *edged* or *strode*.
4. Each choice changes the character's mood, so pick the one that carries the meaning you want.

Model: She strode across the room and snatched the letter.

Remember: Expand **noun groups** with adjectives and phrases to build a picture. Choose **precise verbs** rather than a weak verb plus an adverb. Both add detail without adding sentences.



Question 1: Improve each sentence by expanding the noun group or choosing a more precise verb.

1. The car stopped.

2. The house stood on the hill.

3. A bird landed on the fence.

4. The man walked past.

5. He said he was sorry.

6. She looked at the screen.

7. The wind moved the curtains.

8. They ate their lunch.



Question 2: Read the passage below, then answer the questions.

The heavy iron gate at the end of the drive groaned as it swung. Above it, a dozen startled birds scattered from the branches of a half-dead elm.

1. Find the longest noun group in the passage and write it out.

2. Find two precise verbs and explain what each one suggests.

3. Rewrite the second sentence using weak verbs. What is lost?

4. How do the noun groups affect the mood of the passage?

5. Add one expanded noun group of your own to the passage.



Question 3: Answer the following questions.

1. Expand this noun group: *the room*.

2. Write a sentence using three precise verbs.

3. Explain why a precise verb is usually better than a verb plus an adverb.

4. Why can too many expanded noun groups slow writing down?





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Answers and Model Responses: Noun Groups and Verb Choices**Question 1**

1. Model: The rusted white car with one headlight stopped.
2. Model: The narrow stone house with shuttered windows stood on the hill.
3. Model: A grey bird with a broken tail feather landed on the fence.
4. Model: The man in the long coat walked past.
5. Model: He mumbled an apology.
6. Model: She stared at the screen.
7. Model: The wind snatched at the curtains.
8. Model: They devoured their lunch.

Question 2

1. Model: *the heavy iron gate at the end of the drive*.
2. Model: *groaned*, which suggests age and effort, and *scattered*, which suggests panic and speed.
3. Model: The gate opened and birds went out of the tree. The rewrite loses the atmosphere entirely and becomes a plain report.
4. The detailed noun groups slow the reading down and build an atmosphere of age and neglect.
5. Model: the cracked stone path beneath it.

Question 3

1. Model response: the low-ceilinged room with damp curling the corners of the wallpaper.
2. Model response: He wrenched the door open, hurled the bag inside and slammed it shut.
3. A precise verb carries the manner and the action in one word, which is tighter and more vivid than propping up a weak verb with an adverb.
4. Long noun groups add detail but slow the pace, so using them constantly makes writing feel heavy and stalls the action.

