

ZOO/BOT 4100 - Writing in the Biological Sciences
Exercise 3 –Nouns, Verbs, Passives and Sentence Openers (5 points)

Name _____

Rewrite the following passages to strengthen verbs, eliminate empty nouns, and use the active voice. When you find dead verbs, remember the hint about identifying the word that conveys “real” verb meaning in the sentence – often this will be a noun ending in –tion, –ment, –ance, –ence, etc. Words with these endings are usually verbs that have been converted to nouns. Simply convert that noun to the main verb in the sentence by dropping the ending and rearranging and cleaning up the sentence as necessary.

- 1) Wide variation in hematocrit values occurred during this experiment.

- 2) I have exercised much care in the selection and preparation of the illustration.

- 3) By this time mobilization of the necessary resources had been accomplished.

- 4) The reduction in plant growth may have been caused by one or both of these conditions.

- 5) Nervous impulses cause an acceleration of the heart rate and an increase in the systemic pressure.

- 6) I recommend this book to those in the area of education.

- 7) The remainder of this paper will be devoted to an investigation of Bergman’s rule.

- 8) Improvements in microtechnique have taken place rapidly since the turn of the century.

- 9) Shading of apple, peach and plum trees caused an increase in leaf area, reduction in leaf thickness, and intensified the green color.

- 10) A high degree of correlation can be formed between weight and height.

Convert each passive voice clause to an active voice clause. Keep the same meaning and the same tense. Often the real performer of the action is identified as the object of the preposition “by.” In several cases you will need to invent a subject to be a performer of the action, because the performer is not identified.

- 1) The rule has been changed three times by the university administration.
- 2) The gunman was shot twice.
- 3) The plan had been considered for two years by the faculty before they rejected it.
- 4) An interesting question has been raised by the author.
- 5) The jury decided that the man should be executed.

Identify the opening sentence element in the following sentences, by underlining the full opening element, phrase or clause, and then note whether the opener is a subject opener as a noun or pronoun or a non-subject opener as a dependent clause, prepositional phrase, adverb, coordinate conjunction, or filler word.

Example: Mary is a freshman this year. *Subject opener - noun*

- 1) I finished my writing assignment just before class.
- 2) But after class I need to go to lunch.
- 3) Consequently, we will provide answers on the class web site.
- 4) Although Dr. Smith is an eminent scientist, he sometimes makes mistakes.
- 5) There are 36 students in this class.
- 6) By this time Jones should be in Cheyenne.
- 7) On Tuesday we meet at noon.
- 8) Robert is planning on going to the bar this Friday.
- 9) Unless you have a better plan, we should go to the bar on Saturday.
- 10) During spring break I plan to go to Belize.
- 11) After next week we only have six more weeks until spring break.
- 12) This class meets on Wednesdays.
- 13) And we have another section of the class that meets on Tuesdays.
- 14) After Mary finishes this class, she only needs two more courses to graduate.