Noun Formation

CEFR C1 · Suffix choice, nominalization and register
WS1 Near-Synonymous Suffixes · WS2 Nominalization & Style · WS3 Connotation, Blocking & Register · WS4 Critical Analysis & Writing · Answer Key

Worksheet 1: Near-Synonymous Suffixes

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C1 (CEFR)

Reference: Rival Nominalizers, Divided Meanings

Where two noun suffixes compete, they have often split in meaning or register: **-al vs -ment vs -tion** for an act; **-ness vs -ity** for a quality (*-ness* more general and native; *-ity* more abstract and Latinate). Precise selection — and recognising established splits (*humanity/humanness*, *sensibility/sensitivity*) — marks advanced control.

Contrast	Distinction	Example
-ness / -ity	general/native vs abstract/ Latinate	humanness vs humanity
-tion / -ment / -al	rival act-nouns	assessment vs *assessation; arrival vs *arrivement
-ance / -ancy	act/quality vs state	occupance? → occupancy; brilliance vs brilliancy
-th / -ness	frozen vs productive	warmth vs warmness (rare)
-ery / -age	collective/place vs process/ amount	machinery vs mileage

Part A – Choose with Precision

1. the _____ of the human race — all people collectively (human)
2. an actor's _____ — the quality of seeming human (human)
3. the teacher's _____ of the essays (assess)
4. her _____ to criticism — being easily hurt (sensitive)
5. her _____ — good judgement/taste (sensible)

Part B – Explain the Split

#	Pair	Difference
1	humanity / humanness	
2	sensibility / sensitivity	
3	brilliance / brilliancy	

Score: _____ / 20

Worksheet 2: Nominalization & Style

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C1 (CEFR)

Reference: Turning Clauses into Nouns

Nominalization turns a verb or adjective (and its clause) into a noun phrase: *they decided quickly → their quick decision*. It compresses information, raises formality and abstraction, and is characteristic of academic, scientific and bureaucratic prose. But heavy nominalization can obscure agency and deaden the style — a trade-off writers must manage.

Clause (verbal)	Nominalized	Effect
The population grew.	the growth of the population	abstract, formal
Prices rose sharply.	the sharp rise in prices	compresses into an NP
She analysed the data.	her analysis of the data	process → object
They failed to comply.	their failure to comply	hides tense/agent detail

Part A – Nominalize

Rewrite each clause as a noun phrase.

1. The company expanded rapidly. → _____
2. The government intervened decisively. → _____
3. Employees resisted strongly. → _____

Part B – De-nominalize for Clarity

Rewrite the heavy nominal sentence using verbs, restoring agents.

1. The implementation of the reduction of expenditure caused dissatisfaction.
   _____
2. There was a failure in the identification of the cause. _____

Part C – Judge the Trade-off

For each, say whether nominalization helps or harms, and why.

#	Sentence	Helps / harms + why
1	The rise in temperature accelerated the reaction. (science)	
2	The termination of the engagement of staff was effected. (memo)	
3	Her refusal surprised everyone. (narrative)	

Score: _____ / 25

Worksheet 3: Connotation, Blocking & Register

Name: _____ *Date:* _____ *Level: C1 (CEFR)*

Reference: Not Every Noun Is Available or Neutral

Derived nouns carry connotation (*childishness* negative vs *childlikeness* positive) and register (*-ism* can sound technical or pejorative). **Blocking** bars some forms: **stealer* is blocked by *thief*, **goodness* in the "quality of being good at" sense by *skill*. And some suffixes select only certain bases (Latinate *-ity* vs native *-ness*).

Phenomenon	Explanation	Example
Connotation	suffix/root colours meaning	childishness (neg) / childlikeness (pos)
Register	some nouns formal/technical/ pejorative	-ism: modernism vs cronyism
Blocking	an existing word fills the slot	thief blocks *stealer; theft blocks *stealment
Latinate restriction	-ity prefers Latinate bases	curiosity ✓, *curiousness rare

Part A – Positive, Negative, or Neutral?

#	Noun	Connotation + why
1	cronyism	
2	craftsmanship	
3	childishness	
4	professionalism	

Part B – Blocking

Give the word that blocks the starred form, and explain.

1. *stealer → _____
2. *arrivement → _____
3. *goodness (= being skilled) → _____

Part C – Register Match

Replace the informal noun with a more formal derived synonym.

1. a big get-together → a _____
2. the ups and downs → the _____
3. the go-ahead → the _____

Score: _____ / 30

Worksheet 4: Critical Analysis & Writing

Name: _____ Date: _____ Level: C1 (CEFR)

Part A – Critical Reading

> Nominalization is the native dialect of institutions. Where a person might say that the committee decided to cut jobs, the report announces the implementation of a workforce reduction — and in the transformation, the deciders disappear. The abstraction lends an air of inevitability and objectivity; responsibility dissolves into process. This is not, in itself, dishonest: the same compression gives science its precision and law its generality. But the very neutrality that makes nominalization useful is what makes its misuse so effective.

1. Identify every nominalization and state, for each, the verb or adjective it derives from.
2. "the implementation of a workforce reduction" — de-nominalize it and comment on what the original conceals.
3. Analyse the claim that nominalization lends "inevitability and objectivity". How does the grammar produce this effect?
4. Evaluate: "the very neutrality that makes nominalization useful is what makes its misuse so effective."

Part B – Extended Analytical Writing

Write a formal analytical paragraph of 160–200 words on: "Nominalization is the grammar of power: it turns actions into things and makes agents vanish." You must include and underline: (1) one **-tion/-sion** nominalization; (2) one **-ment** or **-al** nominalization; (3) one **quality noun** (-ness or -ity) chosen for its precise sense; (4) one **nominalization you then justify** as clarifying rather than obscuring; (5) two **epistemic hedges** calibrated to claim strength.

#	Line
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	

Features: _____ / 5 Word count: _____ Score: _____ / 35

Answer Key & Teacher Notes

For teacher use only — C1 Level, Noun Formation

Worksheet 1 – Part A

1 humanity · 2 humanness · 3 assessment · 4 sensitivity · 5 sensibility

Worksheet 1 – Part B (model)

1 humanity = humankind / compassion; humanness = the quality/state of being human (a person's human nature). · 2 sensibility = refined awareness/taste or emotional responsiveness; sensitivity = being easily affected physically or emotionally. · 3 brilliance = great brightness/intelligence (current); brilliancy = archaic/technical variant, largely displaced.

Worksheet 2 – Part A (model)

1 the rapid expansion of the company · 2 the decisive intervention of the government · 3 the strong resistance of employees / strong resistance from employees.

Worksheet 2 – Part B (model)

1 When the company reduced/cut spending, staff were dissatisfied. · 2 They failed to identify the cause.

Worksheet 2 – Part C (model)

1 helps — scientific concision; agents irrelevant. · 2 harms — bureaucratic fog; hides who sacked whom. · 3 helps — compact, and the agent (she) is retained.

Worksheet 3 – Part A (model)

1 cronyism — negative (favouritism/corruption). · 2 craftsmanship — positive (skill). · 3 childishness — negative (immaturity). · 4 professionalism — positive (competence, standards).

Worksheet 3 – Part B (model)

1 thief (an established word fills the "person who steals" slot). · 2 arrival (the lexicalised -al noun blocks -ment). · 3 skill/ability/proficiency (blocks "goodness" in the competence sense).

Worksheet 3 – Part C (model)

1 a gathering / an assembly · 2 the fluctuations / vicissitudes · 3 the authorisation / approval.

Worksheet 4 – Part A (model)

1 nominalization (nominalize), implementation (implement), reduction (reduce), transformation (transform), abstraction (abstract), inevitability (inevitable), objectivity (objective), responsibility (responsible), compression (compress), precision (precise), generality (general), neutrality (neutral), misuse (misuse). · 2 "The committee implemented a reduction of the workforce" → "The committee cut jobs / decided to cut jobs" — the nominal hides who decided and softens "cutting jobs" into an abstract "reduction". · 3 By deleting the agent and tense and presenting an action as an existing "thing", nominalization removes the human chooser, so the event reads as a self-standing fact rather than someone's decision — hence inevitability and objectivity. · 4 A strong answer agrees: the same agent-deleting compression that gives science and law their economy also lets institutions erase responsibility; neutrality is a feature that can be exploited, so utility and misusability share one root.

Worksheet 4 – Part B: Marking Rubric

Criterion	Descriptor	Marks
-tion/-sion nominalization	Correct, apt	0–5
-ment/-al nominalization	Correct, apt	0–5
Precise quality noun	-ness/-ity sense correct	0–5
Justified nominalization	Defended as clarifying	0–5
Argument & length	160–200 words; developed with hedges	0–5