Questions & Negatives

CEFR C1 · Information structure, emphasis and syntactic control

WS1 Information Structure & End-weight · WS2 Cleft, Fronting & Inversion · WS3 Nominalisation & Density · WS4 Critical Analysis & Writing · Answer Key

Worksheet 1: Information Structure & End-weight

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

Reference: Given Before New; Light Before Heavy

English tends to place **given** (known) information early and **new** or focal information late — the *end-focus* principle. It also prefers **light** (short) elements before **heavy** (long) ones — *end-weight*. These principles motivate the passive, extraposition (*it … that*), and dative alternation.

Device	Motivation	Example
Passive	keep given subject; defer agent	The bridge was designed by a famous firm.
Extraposition	shift heavy clause to end	**It** surprised us **that he resigned**.
Dative shift	end-weight on the object	She gave **the committee** a long report.
Fronting	make a topic given	**That book**, I've already read.

Part A – Improve the End-focus

Rewrite so that new/focal or heavier information falls at the end.

1. That we had been misled was clear. → _____
2. A report that ran to 300 pages was submitted by the panel. → _____
3. To finish on time proved impossible. → _____

Part B – Why the Passive Here?

State the information-structure reason the passive is preferable in each context.

#	Sentence	Reason for the passive
1	The manuscript was finally recovered — decades after the theft.	
2	Mistakes were made. (in an apology)	
3	Penicillin was discovered in 1928.	

Score: _____ / 20

Worksheet 2: Cleft, Fronting & Inversion

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

Reference: Marked Structures for Emphasis

Clefts split one clause into two to spotlight a constituent. Fronting moves an element to the front for topic or contrast; when the fronted element is negative or restrictive, it triggers subject–auxiliary inversion. These are hallmarks of controlled, formal prose.

Structure	Form	Focus
It-cleft	It was **X** that/who…	spotlights X
Wh-/pseudo-cleft	**What** X did was…	spotlights the action/result
All-cleft	**All** (that) X did was…	restrictive, minimising
Fronting	**This point** I accept.	topic / contrast
Negative inversion	**Not only** did he…, but…	emphatic + inversion

Part A – Rewrite as the Cleft Named

1. Her silence hurt most. (it-cleft) → _____
2. He needs a break, nothing more. (all-cleft) → _____
3. They ignored the warnings — that's the problem. (wh-cleft) → _____

Part B – Front and Invert

Begin each with the element given; invert where required.

1. She had rarely seen such skill. → Rarely _____.
2. He not only apologised but also resigned. → Not only _____.
3. We understood the cost only later. → Only later _____.
4. The truth lay beneath the surface. → Beneath the surface _____.

Part C – Inversion or Cleft?

For each, say which structure better serves the focus, and why.

#	Context	Choice & reason
1	Emphasising WHO caused a failure	
2	Adding dramatic, formal emphasis to a negative adverbial	
3	Contrasting one option against another	

Score: _____ / 25

Worksheet 3: Nominalisation & Density

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

Reference: Turning Clauses into Noun Phrases

Nominalisation turns verbs and adjectives into nouns (*decide → decision*, *dense → density*), packing information into noun phrases. It raises lexical density and formality and enables abstraction — but overuse produces heavy, agentless, hard-to-read prose.

Congruent (clausal)	Nominalised	Effect
Prices rose, so demand fell.	The rise in prices caused a fall in demand.	abstract, formal
They failed to comply.	Their failure to comply…	packs into subject
The system was introduced. It improved safety.	The introduction of the system improved safety.	denser

Part A – Nominalise

Rewrite each using a nominalised noun phrase as the subject.

1. The government decided to intervene. This shocked markets. _____
2. Because the staff resisted, the reform stalled. _____
3. The bridge collapsed suddenly, which caused panic. _____

Part B – De-nominalise for Clarity

Unpack each dense sentence into clearer, more agentive clauses.

#	Dense sentence	Clearer version
1	The implementation of the reduction of expenditure was a requirement.	
2	There was a failure of communication between the parties.	
3	The cancellation of the event was due to a lack of attendance.	

Part C – Judge the Register

For each pair, say which is more appropriate for a formal report and which for spoken advice.

1. a) We looked into why it failed. b) An investigation into the causes of failure was conducted. _____
2. a) The delay annoyed customers. b) Customer dissatisfaction arose from the delay. _____

Score: _____ / 30

Worksheet 4: Critical Analysis & Writing

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

Part A – Critical Reading

> What ultimately doomed the project was not a lack of funding but a failure of nerve. Rarely had a proposal attracted such early enthusiasm; rarely, too, had one been abandoned so abruptly. The withdrawal of the lead investor, announced without warning, triggered a collapse of confidence from which the venture never recovered. It was only in hindsight that the warning signs — a succession of missed targets, a steady erosion of trust — became legible. That they had been ignored is, perhaps, the most damning verdict of all.

1. Identify the cleft sentences and state what each foregrounds.
2. Find the negative inversion and rewrite it in neutral order, noting what is lost.
3. The passage relies on nominalisation (*withdrawal, collapse, erosion*). Analyse its effect on tone and agency — who is doing what?
4. Comment on how end-focus and end-weight shape the final two sentences.

Part B – Extended Analytical Writing

Write a formal analytical paragraph of 160–200 words on: "Good style is less about correctness than about the management of emphasis."

You must include and underline: (1) one **cleft** sentence; (2) one instance of **fronting with inversion**; (3) one deliberate use of **end-weight** (extraposition or passive); (4) one **nominalisation** used precisely; (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, Sentence Structures

Worksheet 1 – Part A (model)

1 It was clear that we had been misled. (extraposition) · 2 The panel submitted a report that ran to 300 pages. (heavy object last) · 3 It proved impossible to finish on time. (extraposition)

Worksheet 1 – Part B (model)

1 Keeps "the manuscript" (given) as topic and defers the striking time adverbial to end-focus. · 2 Agentless passive avoids naming the responsible party — the focus falls on the fact, not the doer. · 3 The date/agent is unimportant or generic; the discovery itself is the given topic.

Worksheet 2 – Part A (model)

1 It was her silence that hurt most. · 2 All (that) he needs is a break. · 3 What they did was ignore the warnings. / What caused the problem was their ignoring the warnings.

Worksheet 2 – Part B

1 Rarely had she seen such skill. · 2 Not only did he apologise, but he also resigned. · 3 Only later did we understand the cost. · 4 Beneath the surface lay the truth. (subject–verb inversion after fronted place adverbial)

Worksheet 2 – Part C (model)

1 it-cleft ("It was X who caused…") — pinpoints the agent. · 2 negative inversion — lends formal, dramatic emphasis a cleft can't. · 3 cleft (or fronting) — clefts handle contrastive focus between two items cleanly.

Worksheet 3 – Part A (model)

1 The government's decision to intervene shocked markets. · 2 Staff resistance stalled the reform. · 3 The bridge's sudden collapse caused panic.

Worksheet 3 – Part B (model)

1 The expenditure had to be reduced. / They were required to cut spending. · 2 The parties failed to communicate. · 3 The event was cancelled because too few people attended.

Worksheet 3 – Part C

1 formal report → b; spoken advice → a. · 2 formal report → b; spoken advice → a.

The teaching point is control, not avoidance: nominalisation is a tool for abstraction and concision, but agentless density can obscure responsibility. Students should choose consciously.

Worksheet 4 – Part A (model)

1 "What ultimately doomed the project was… a failure of nerve" (wh-cleft — foregrounds the true cause); "It was only in hindsight that the warning signs … became legible" (it-cleft — foregrounds the timing). · 2 "Rarely had a proposal attracted such early enthusiasm" → A proposal had rarely attracted such early enthusiasm — neutral order loses the emphatic, elegiac cadence and the parallelism with the following "rarely, too". · 3 Nominalisations (*withdrawal, collapse, erosion*) suppress agents — we aren't told who withdrew or eroded trust; this lends an air of inevitability and formal detachment. · 4 The heavy appositive lists ("a succession of missed targets, a steady erosion of trust") sit at the end (end-weight); the final sentence fronts a nominal *that*-clause as given, landing the verdict ("the most damning") in focus position.

Worksheet 4 – Part B: Marking Rubric

Criterion	Descriptor	Marks
Cleft	Correctly formed; focus motivated	0–5
Fronting / inversion	Fronting with correct inversion	0–5
End-weight	Extraposition or passive used for end-focus	0–5
Nominalisation	Used precisely, not merely for density	0–5
Argument & length	160–200 words; position developed with hedges	0–5