Worksheet 1: Exercises on Nominal Style

One of the most characteristic features of written language is that it used for communicating relatively 'impersonally' across space and time. Often the Field of the discourse is a technical one, and this leads to a kind of 'metaphorical transference': instead of processes being represented by verbal groups, things by nominal groups, and the logical relations between processes by conjunctions, we find different assignments of categories: processes are represented by nominal groups (which often include pre- and post-modification to denote the things involved in the processes), and logical relations among processes are represented by verbal groups.

Task 1:

The following sentences each contain more than one clause and are written in *Verbalstil*. Rewrite each sentence according to the pattern given, by nominalizing the events portrayed in the individual clauses and changing the conjunctive relation into a verbal group, thus producing one simple sentence in *Nominalstil*.

1. a. After the FDP won the election, the SPD merged with the CDU.

   b. The FDP's election victory was followed by the SPD's merger with the CDU.

2. a. Before Trump won the Electoral College vote, the Democrats had effectively collapsed.

   b. _____

3. a. Because Le Pen won the election, France abolished the euro and reintroduced the franc.

   b. _____

4. a. At the same time as Le Pen won in France, the Corbynistas staged a successful coup in the U.K.

   b. _____

See the double-sided sheet **Lexical Density and Grammatical Metaphor.**

You might also like to look at the notion of 'einfache Sprache':
http://www.sr.de/sr/home/nachrichten/nachrichten_einfach/index.html
or 'leichte Sprache':
http://fad-saar.de/leichte-sprache/

Task 2:

Working in small groups, transform the following from nominal style to verbal style, then be ready to share your solutions with the rest of the class.

1. The guests' dinner of roast beef and ice cream was followed by a gentle swim.

2. The fifth day saw them at the summit.

3. He has a comfortable income.

4. Advances in technology are speeding up the writing of business programs.

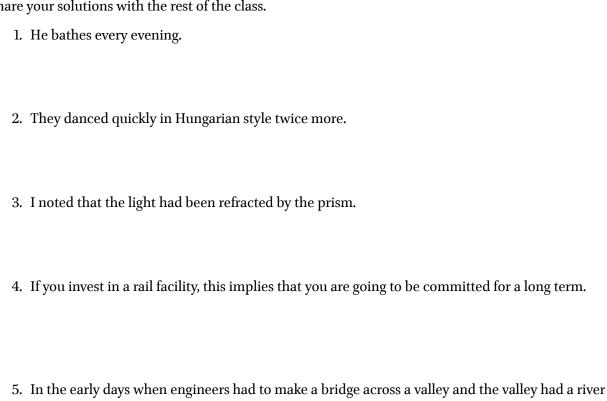5. To add alcohol impairment to the problem of inexperience is an invitation to disaster.

Task 3:

Working in small groups, transform the following from verbal style to nominal style, then be ready to share your solutions with the rest of the class.

1. He bathes every evening.

2. They danced quickly in Hungarian style twice more.

3. I noted that the light had been refracted by the prism.

4. If you invest in a rail facility, this implies that you are going to be committed for a long term.

5. In the early days when engineers had to make a bridge across a valley and the valley had a river flowing through it, they often built viaducts, which were constructed of masonry and had numerous arches in them; and many of these viaducts became notable.

You might like to look at the following article:

http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/
20160908-the-language-rules-we-know-but-dont-know-we-know
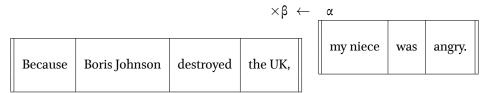
Degrees of nominalization

1. Two sentences, each consisting of one independent finite clause:

   s

Boris Johnson	destroyed	the UK.

   s

This	angered	my niece.

2. Main clause plus main clause ('parataxis'; 'coordination'):

   1 → +2

Boris Johnson	destroyed	the UK,

and	this	angered	my niece.

3. Dependent finite clause followed by independent clause ('hypotaxis'; 'subordination'):

   ×β ← α

Because	Boris Johnson	destroyed	the UK,

my niece	was	angry.

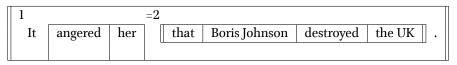4. Only one main clause (X upset her); the Subject (X) is an <u>embedded</u> finite *that*-clause):

That	Boris Johnson	destroyed	the UK	angered	my niece.

5. A variant of 4.; here the embedded finite clause (X) functions as a **postmodifier** to the noun *fact* within the Subject:

The fact	that	Boris Johnson	destroyed	the UK	angered	her.

6. Another variant of 4.; here the *that*-clause is 'postposed' – 'put at the end' – in accordance with the principle of END WEIGHT:

   1   =2

It	angered	her	that	Boris Johnson	destroyed	the UK	.

7. Like 4., except that the Subject is an embedded <u>imperfective</u> **non**-finite clause (him destroying the UK; '-*ing* form'; 'gerund'). Note that in modern colloquial English the Subject of an -*ing* form is not in the subject case (!) — here: "him".):

Him	destroying	the UK	angered	her.

8. Same as 7., but with the older form of the Subject of an -*ing* form:

His	destroying	the UK	angered	her.

The beginning ('His destroying') looks like the beginning of a nominal group (determiner plus noun, cf 'his house'), but the end ('destroying the UK') looks like the end of a clause (verb plus direct object).

9. Same as 7., but the Subject is an embedded <u>perfective</u> non-finite clause ('for him to destroy the UK'; 'infinitive form'):

For him	to destroy	the UK	would anger	her.

The subject of an infinitive in English is not in the subject case (!), and is introduced by *for*.

10. Full syntactic nominalization; the underlying process ('destroy') has been turned into a noun – the noun looks like a verb (verb stem plus 'ing' ending), but it has a determiner to the left of it and a post-modifier to the right of it:

His destroying	of the UK	angered	her.

11. Full syntactic and lexical nominalization; the underlying process ('destroy') has been turned into a noun – that noun **looks like** a noun, and has the syntax of a noun, with a determiner to the left and a post-modifier to the right:

His destruction	of the UK	angered	her.

N.B.: *his*: genitivus subiectivus (genitive of the subject: '<u>he</u> destroyed'); *of the UK*: genitivus obiectivus (genitive of the object: 'destroyed <u>the UK</u>').

$$N \Longleftarrow V$$

$$\Uparrow \qquad\qquad \Uparrow$$

$$Adj \Longleftarrow Adv$$