

## Structuring complex Noun Groups

The following revision is taken from a dissertation by a Turkish-speaking postgraduate student of Education

Original	Revision
The study describes both English and Turkish secondary school history teacher training systems.	The study describes systems for the training of secondary school history teachers in both England and Turkey.

Academic English in general is well-known (one might say notorious) for the use of complex noun groups such as the one attempted by this student, with a long string of pre-modifiers in front of the head of the noun group (here, the word *systems*). The problem is that it can be very difficult to interpret such a noun group, particularly when, as here, the 'chunking' of the premodifiers is ambiguous (does *teacher* belong immediately to *history*, as in *history teacher*, or to *training*, as in *teacher training*?). The revision on the right makes the meaning plain by removing the head noun from last position to first, and by showing the chunking and the meaning relationship of the chunks through prepositions (*for - of - in*).

Here are five examples from my data where *system* was the head word at the start off the nominal group: I have re-written each of them so that *system* appears at the end of the nominal group. Can you re-write the examples so that *system* appears in its original position at the start of the noun group? I have done the first one for you.

Head word at end of nominal group	Head word at start of nominal group
A <b>financial dispute resolution system</b> has been announced by the Corporation of London.	A <b>system for resolving financial disputes</b> has been announced by the Corporation of London
In 1922 he set up a <b>telephone line gramophone record transmission system</b> ,	
Researchers at the computer consultancy Logica have been working on an automatic <b>station platform congestion monitoring system</b> .	
In the past, there was no coherent <b>medical literature review or information dissemination system</b> .	

[Key to exercise](#)

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*5th January 1999*

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