

PLSC 448. Fall 2007.

Locate action in verbs exercise

Revise the following phrases and sentences, according to the principle to try to locate action in verbs.

- where feasible, eliminate weak verbs such as: is, was, occurred, resulted in

Particle migration occurred . . .

Particles migrated ...

locates action in verb, economizes phrasing

Particle fluid migration occurred . . .

Fluid migration of particles occurred . . . ?

Migration of fluid particles occurred . . . ?

Particles migrated . . .

This was in a soil context, so maybe "fluid" is assumed. Be careful of using nouns as adjectives — in a strict grammatical sense, it is incorrect. It can also be confusing. English editors are particularly irritated by it.

The fertilizer resulted in elevating these soil nutrients . . .

The fertilizer elevated these soil nutrients . . .

An additional confounding effect occurred from wind-blown dust which predominates in the same soil fractional sizes mentioned.

Wind-blown dust, which predominates in the same soil fractional sizes, also confounded results.

What is the subject of most interest in this sentence; what is doing something?

Wind-blown dust. So introduce it first, make it the subject of the sentence.

"confounding effect" is okay, but you don't need two words where one will suffice, especially if down-sizing to one word also gives your sentence the added benefit of locating the action in the verb.

Wind-blown dust also confounded results, because it predominates in the same soil fractional sizes mentioned above.

This explains the rather ambiguous previous reference to fractional sizes. It also locates the verb right after the subject.

Topdressing and dust added silt and clay resulted in a reversal of analysis for these fractions.

Topdressing- and dust-added silt and clay resulted in a reversal of analysis for these fractions. ?

Topdressing and dust added silt and clay, resulting in a reversal of analysis for these fractions. ?

Responses of fish may include lower age of maturity, increased growth rate, increased fecundity, and decreased disease transmission.

Fish may mature at a younger age, grow more quickly, lay more eggs and catch fewer diseases.

There was a tendency for turf to show increased growth at higher levels of nitrogen fertilization.

Turf grew more with higher nitrogen fertilization.

The positive benefit from the bacterium inoculation was particularly evidenced on root growth.

Roots grew faster when inoculated with the bacterium.

In particular, roots grew faster when inoculated with the bacterium.

A particularly positive benefit of bacterial inoculation was that roots grew faster.

These results confirm the importance of some characteristics related to the effectiveness of autochthonous microorganisms in dry soils, which resulted in a greater nutrient acquisition and relative plant water uptake.

Plants acquired nutrients and water more effectively in dry soil when associated with autochthonous microorganisms.

Plants in dry soil acquired nutrients and water more effectively when associated with autochthonous microorganisms.

Place important info in nouns and verbs; have clear subject, verb and object of verb convey the key ideas. In original wording, subject of sentence is “results”, verb is “confirm” and object is “importance”, with key ideas relegated to two subordinate clauses (relatively weak location for the key ideas). “Results confirm importance” vs. “Plants acquired nutrients and water”.

Attention to reader expectations increases likelihood readers will understand meaning. I can understand the original wording, but I have to work pretty hard for it, and it wears me out (reader fatigue).

It is accepted that the role of soil microbes in contributing to plant establishment, growth and drought-tolerance when growing under water-stress conditions is the result of nutritional, physiological and cellular effects (Jones and Flobberblaster 2005).

Soil microbes help plants establish, grow and tolerate drought by affecting their nutrition, physiology and cell biology (Jones and Flobberblaster 2005).