

PLSC 448. Fall 2007.

subject verb placement exercise

Revise the following phrases and sentences, according to the principle of subject verb placement.

That the role of soil microbes in contributing to plant establishment, growth and drought-tolerance when growing under water-stress conditions occurs through nutritional, physiological and cellular effects has been known for a long time (Jones and Flobberblaster 2005). *35 words*  
 25 words between subject and verb (what is the subject?)

Soil microbes help plants establish, grow and tolerate drought by affecting their nutrition, physiology and cell biology (Jones and Flobberblaster 2005). *17 words*

The most interesting of the growth-promoting soil fungi, *Trichoderma*, a usually aggressive colonizer that can be readily cultured, added to potting media and caused to infect plant roots, has been found to be effective in reduction of rooting time of chrysanthemum cuttings. *43 words*  
 26 words separate subject and verb (better than "There are 26 words between subject and verb").

Action is not located in verb.

Sentence does not begin with most important idea or subject.

The growth-promoting soil fungus *Trichoderma* can reduce rooting time of chrysanthemum cuttings. This usually aggressive fungal colonizer can be readily cultured, added to potting media, and caused to infect plant roots. *32 words*

Reference to "interesting" was probably not necessary and was removed.

Verbs now immediately follow subjects.

Action is located in verb ("reducing") rather than in noun ("reduction").

"can be effective in reducing" -or- "can reduce"

Possible awkward construction ("this ... colonizer" follows "cuttings.")

*Trichoderma* is a growth-promoting soil fungus that can reduce rooting time of chrysanthemum cuttings. Usually an aggressive colonizer of roots, *Trichoderma* can be readily cultured and added to potting media. *31 words*

Possible awkward construction is avoided.

*Trichoderma*, the important subject here, is the subject of both sentences; to break up a possible "sing-song" effect, sentence 2 begins with a phrase that modifies the subject.

The redundancy has been removed from sentence 2.

*Trichoderma*, a growth-promoting soil fungus, is usually an aggressive colonizer of roots that can be readily cultured and added to potting media. It can reduce rooting time of chrysanthemum cuttings.

*Trichoderma* is a growth-promoting soil fungus that can reduce rooting time of chrysanthemum cuttings. It can be readily cultured and added to potting media, and is usually an aggressive colonizer of roots.

Ivermectin, a systemic antiparasitic drug effective against a number of arthropod parasites and gastrointestinal nematodes in cattle, is metabolized very little by treated animals regardless of administration method used. Most of the drug is excreted in the feces in concentrations decreasing daily after treatment.

16 words separate subject and verb.

The systemic antiparasitic drug ivermectin is effective against a number of arthropod parasites and gastrointestinal nematodes in cattle. Regardless of administration method, treated animals metabolize very little ivermectin, and most of the drug is excreted in the feces in concentrations decreasing daily after treatment.

Subject now follows verb, but verb is not all that exciting or action-packed.

The systemic antiparasitic drug ivermectin suppresses arthropod parasites and gastrointestinal nematodes in cattle. Regardless of administration method, treated animals metabolize very little ivermectin, and most of the drug is excreted in the feces in concentrations decreasing daily after treatment.

"is effective against a number of " (6 words) replaced by "suppresses" (1 word), also localizing the action in a verb rather in an adjective and preposition.

"used" after "method" was removed.

The systemic antiparasitic drug ivermectin suppresses arthropod parasites and gastrointestinal nematodes in cattle. Regardless of administration method, treated animals metabolize very little ivermectin. Most of the drug is excreted in the feces, with fecal concentrations decreasing daily after treatment.

Attorneys for two defendants who were not at the Davidian compound on the day of the Feb. 28, 1993, gunfight near Waco, Texas, that killed four federal agents and five sect members, said their clients should never have been charged.

31 words between subject and verb (Attorneys . . . said).

Two defendants were not at the Davidian compound near Waco, Texas, on the day of the Feb. 28, 1993, gunfight that killed four federal agents and five sect members, and attorneys said their clients should never have been charged.

Attorneys are not the subject of interest here, so begin the idea with 'two defendants', the real subject of interest.

The modifying phrase 'near Waco Texas' could probably be placed after either 'compound' or 'gunfight', but placing it after 'compound' avoids the perhaps awkward cluster of commas (originally 4 commas within 6 words).