



BRING VERBS TO LIFE

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ACTIVE VS. PASSIVE

Passive verbs make it too easy to avoid saying who did what. They also add to length while weakening the sentence.

Instead of:

The policy was approved on December 10, 2000.

On July 16, 2000, the proposed policy was approved by the Deputy Minister.

Environment Canada is supportive of our position.

Why not say:

Cabinet approved the policy on December 10, 2000.

On July 16, 2000, the Deputy Minister approved the proposed policy.

Environment Canada supports our position.

SIMPLE FUTURE VS. FUTURE PROGRESSIVE

Avoid the future progressive unless the action is truly progressive over a significant period of time.

Instead Of:

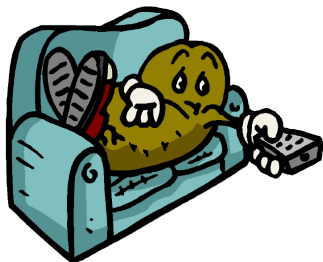
The Honourable Pierre Pettigrew,
Minister for International Trade,
will be signing the MOU on
September 30, 2000.

The Honourable Pierre Pettigrew,
Minister for International Trade,
will be attending the conference
on September 30, 2000.

Why Not Say:

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TURN NOUNS INTO VERBS



We often turn perfectly good verbs into nouns. This reduces the impact of a sentence and adds to length. As with short words, no one of these makes a big difference by itself. Dozens of them, however, can cast a dense fog over your writing.

In rare cases, using the noun rather than the verb makes an important legal, technical or administrative distinction. But in most cases, doing so is bureaucratic hair-splitting that will mean nothing to your minister.

Watch for opportunities to turn nouns back into verbs. Here are some examples. Note how the examples with verbs are shorter than those that use nouns instead.

Instead of . . .

These policies are applicable to all employees.

Cost reductions could be realized through this approach.

That is not the implication to be drawn from our position.

Our focus will be on sustainable development.

Why not say . . .

These policies apply to all employees.

This approach could reduce costs.

Our position does not imply that.

We will focus on sustainable development.

We have developed new procedures for the recovery of costs.

Dr. Petersen will be in attendance.

I encourage the participation of your division.

The committee's advice was that we should proceed.

I have made a decision to attend the conference.

This award is in recognition of your achievements in science.

Discussions have been started on sustainable forestry issues between NRCan and industry.

Branch managers will hold a briefing session for the media at 1 p.m.

Consultations have been conducted by NRCan with other federal departments.

The Auditor General's report was critical of performance in this area.

NRCan took diverse views into consideration before making a decision on that issue.

We have developed new procedures for recovering costs.

Dr. Petersen will attend.

I encourage your division to take part.

The committee advised us to proceed.

I have decided to attend the conference.

This award recognizes your achievements in science.

NRCan and industry have started to discuss sustainable forestry issues.

Branch managers will brief the media at 1 p.m.

NRCan has consulted other federal departments.

The Auditor General's report criticized performance in this area.

NRCan considered diverse views before deciding on that issue.

Alberta has expressed opposition to a carbon tax.

Alberta opposes a carbon tax.

The conference was successful in advancing the cause of fostering improved mutual understanding between industry and environmental groups.

The conference helped industry and environmental groups to understand one another.

Industry's intention is to seek new markets abroad.

Industry intends to seek new markets abroad.

The appointment of the chair is made jointly by the Minister of NRCan and provincial ministers of natural resources.

The Minister of NRCan and provincial ministers of natural resources jointly appoint the chair.

Coal is used for the generation of electricity in several provinces.

Several provinces generate electricity with coal.

You have received an invitation to attend CDMA's annual meeting.

CDMA has invited you to attend its annual meeting.

This represents an impediment to growth.

This impedes growth.

We are undertaking a study of that problem.

We are studying that problem.

I will make a request for supplies.

I will request supplies.
I will ask for supplies.

We are conducting a research project

We are assessing the feasibility of

to assess the feasibility of that option.

that option.

or:

We are studying the feasibility of that option.

or:

We are researching the feasibility of that option.

This initiative will have a positive impact on the oil industry.

This initiative will help the oil industry.

This initiative will have a negative impact on exports.

This initiative will hamper exports.

We are responsible for the development of technology for sustainable mining.

We develop technology for sustainable mining.

There are several reasons why NRCan gives its support for sustainable forestry.

NRCan supports sustainable forestry for several reasons.

Funding for the program is provided by NRCan and DFAIT.

NRCan and DFAIT are funding the program.

We are in the process of working on the development of new methods to solve that problem.

We are developing new methods to solve that problem.

or:

We are solving that problem.

This development will result in the creation of new jobs in the North.

This development will create new jobs in the North.

We will conduct a research project to survey public opinion.

This committee serves as a link between industry and the public.

This project will have a positive impact on community relations.

Your letter includes a reference to . . .

Your letter makes mention of . . .

We will make arrangements for publication of the report.

This program is complementary to your priorities.

This funding program is applicable to new projects.

We have conducted a study on the cost of that option.

We have made modifications to the wording of that section.

or:
This development will lead to new jobs in the North.

We will research public opinion.
or:
We will survey public opinion.

This committee links industry and the public.

This project will enhance community relations.

Your letter refers to . . .

Your letter mentions . . .

We will arrange for publication of the report.
or:
We will publish the report.

This program complements your priorities.

This funding program applies to new projects.

We have studied the cost of that option.

We have modified the wording of that section.

This initiative is a reflection of our new directions in sustainable development.

This initiative reflects our new directions in sustainable development.