

104 Using nouns instead of verbs

African musician Thomas Mapfumo **decided** to move to the USA in 2004. **The decision** disappointed his fans at home in Zimbabwe but they still love his music.



1 Using noun phrases

We can sometimes replace a verb with a noun which has the same meaning. We can then get the same information into a shorter sentence:

*He **decided** to move and this **disappointed** his fans.* (two clauses, two verbs)

*The **decision** to move **disappointed** his fans.* (one clause, one verb)

A noun or noun phrase often summarises known information from an earlier sentence.

This is useful when we are developing an argument or explanation in writing:

*Hundreds of fans started to push towards the stage. **The situation** became dangerous.*

(*the situation* = hundreds of fans pushing)

Other examples include *event, situation, things, activity*:

*Apple opened their online music store in 2003. **This event** changed the way music was sold.*

*After their number one hit, the group received an invitation to tour the USA. **Things** were getting better and better.*

2 Making nouns from verbs

It is often possible to make verbs into nouns by adding a suffix, e.g. *arrive* → *arrival*, *decide* → *decision*, *educate* → *education*, *teach* → *teacher* (► Unit 95).

FORMALITY CHECK In informal English we sometimes use verbs as nouns after *do, have, get, give*, etc.

*Can you **call** her tomorrow?* → *Can you give her **a call** tomorrow?*

*We **walked** around the park.* → *We had **a walk** around the park.*

We can sometimes make nouns from phrasal and prepositional verbs:

*The taxi **broke down** just outside the airport.* → *The **breakdown** happened just outside the airport.*

*When did he **take over** the company?* → *When was the **takeover**?*

-ing forms of verbs as subjects and objects ► Unit 64.2

3 Making nouns from verb phrases

To make a noun phrase from a verb phrase we often use two nouns linked by a preposition:

VERB PHRASE	NOUN PHRASE
<i>They released the video in 2009 and this helped to increase their album sales.</i>	<i>The release of the video in 2009 helped to increase their album sales.</i>
<i>The rules were changed last week, which annoyed the public.</i>	<i>The change to the rules last week annoyed the public.</i>
<i>The government became unpopular after they increased taxes.</i>	<i>The government became unpopular after the increase in taxes.</i>