Clarity

# Subject-agent disparity

When we write, we participate in a basic form of communication. Our sentences should convey the information as clearly as possible, but we so often have to stop and reread in order to understand something. The most common reason for reader confusion is the lack of a concrete agent as the subject in a sentence.

# Example

Read this sentence once and try to make sense of what is happening:

Governmental intervention in fast-changing technologies has led to the distortion of market evolution and interference in new product development.

**Problems:**

1. This sentence does not have an agent as the subject. The agent is the person, or entity, that performs the action. When the subject of a sentence is not the agent, it becomes harder to understand.
2. This sentence also nominalizes the actions. When the action is not the verb, our brains have to work extra just to identify what is happening, rather than about the ideas in that sentence.

**Solution:**

Now, look at the sentence again and identify the subject, the agent, the verb(s), and the actions. Write the words in the appropriate spaces below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Subject: | Verb(s): |
| Agent: | Action(s): |

# practice

The ideal sentence has a subject that is also the agent, and the verbs are the actions.

Rewrite the sentence using the agent as the subject and the action(s) as verbs.

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