Increasing Technicality and Increasing Compression

This section contains two activities demonstrating the use of noun groups.

**Activity 1: head word, pointer, pre-modifiers**

**Activity 2: post-modifiers**

**Activity 1:**

Label the parts of the following noun groups as head word, pointer, descriptive adjective or classifying adjective using the definitions of the elements that can go into the noun group.

1. Nuclear power

2. Nuclear power reactors

3. A nuclear power station

**Definitions**

**Head word**

This refers to the central or core word — the noun or ‘thing’ that is central to the noun group e.g. pot

**Pre-modifiers**

Pointer: this is often an article (e.g. a, the) and it functions to point to or select what is the core focus of the noun group e.g. ‘the’ pot.

Descriptive adjective: this commonly describes the physical appearance of the noun e.g. the ‘blue’ pot. It can also add expression or emotion to the head word e.g. the ‘exquisite’ blue pot. You can add none, one or more descriptive adjectives to the noun. Descriptive adjectives can also be intensified.
Classifying adjective: these adjectives function to classify the type of noun or head word e.g. the exquisite blue ‘ceramic’ pot. You can also add none, one or more classifying adjectives to the noun group e.g. the hand-crafted ceramic kitchen pot. Classifying adjectives tell us ‘what kind of’ thing the noun is.

Activity 2:

Post-modifiers

Noun groups also have another resource for compressing information, the Post-modifier. Post-modifiers follow the noun. They appear as groups of words such as ‘from Port Douglas’. They can also be embedded clauses (e.g. which can be found in Far North Queensland).

Now label the following noun groups:

4. The danger of radioactive waste and materials

5. Most western countries that use fossil-fuelled power stations

ANSWERS

1. Nuclear power
   Classifying adj. Head word

2. Nuclear power reactors
   Classifying adj. Classifying adj. Head word

3. A nuclear power station
   Pointer Classifying adj. Classifying adj. Head word

4. The danger of radioactive waste and materials
   Pointer Head word Qualifier (group: classifying adj, Head
   word & Head word)

5. Most western countries that use fossil-fuelled power stations
   Pointer Classifying adjective Head word qualifier (embedded clause)