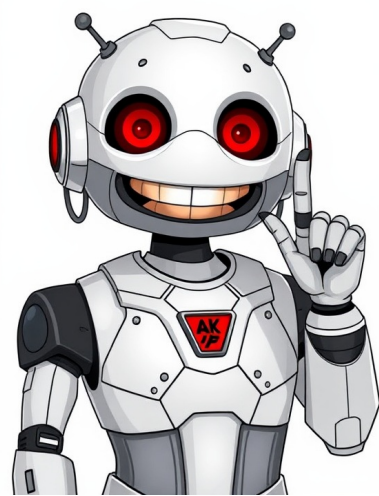


I'm not a bot



Closed. This question is off-topic. It is not currently accepting answers. If A is the main factor in successfully doing something, is it proper to use "A plays the key role in doing something" rather than "A plays a key role in doing something" (I think the latter means A is just one of important factors, instead of the most important one)? Thanks very much! It may or may not be the original source of this usage of the term, but in a 1965 article on administration, Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard wrote: HAT: Slang for the title and work of a post in an org. Taken from the fact that in many professions such as railroading the type of hat worn is the badge for the job. The article is a policy letter (article on the administration methods to be applied by Scientology Churches) from 1 July 1965the third such issue on that particular day. Its title is "Hats, The Reason For." The word "hat" with this meaning is used liberally throughout Scientology materials on administration, many of which date from the early 1960s. There is an earlier article (policy letter) from 28 February 1957, titled simply "Hats," which seems to be one of the earliest usages of this particular definition by Mr. Hubbard. It would not surprise me at all if that were the original source of this definition, though I have no evidence either way on that. (Proving a negative is difficult, but this at least aligns with the approximate dates mentioned in other answers.) A title is the name of a position within the company heirarchy. "Production Engineer," "Maintenance Engineer," and "Reliability Engineer" are examples of job positions that various kinds of engineers (Chemical Engineers, Mechanical Engineers, etc., by their training) may be hired into. A role is the part that is played within a specific work process within the company. For example, during a large maintenance outage at a chemical plant, the Maintenance Engineer might be placed in charge of crane lifts, as a safety liaison; a Production Engineer may handle the plant shut-down and start-up logistics by interfacing with outside Utilities people--his role might be called "shutdown coordinator"; and a Reliability Engineer might fill the role of a "gatekeeper" that evaluates unplanned problems found during the planned work, to decide if the additional work should be accomplished during the outage or put off until later. So a job title speaks to certain abilities and typical tasks based on training and experience, but also speaks to the level of the job within the organization (consider an Assistant Professor versus a Professor) and determines pay grade. But a job role is the application of talents and abilities specific to a situation. A person holding a job title can have different roles in different situations. There is no significant definitional difference between the three expressions, but they differ in connotation, so they cannot exactly be used interchangeably either. "To take a role" is a neutral expression, which can be used in a variety of ways but usually serves as a denotation that implies nothing else. It doesn't seem like what you're looking for. "To take over a role" is, as you said, to take a role that was previously occupied by somebody else, which seems to be what you're looking for, as your colleague "replaced" another worker, so he "took over" that worker's role. "To take on a role" is, again as you said, to accept the role as a challenge. However, you seem to be emphasizing the replacement aspect more than the challenge aspect, at least from what I can tell by your description. I'd personally recommend "take over the role". I am writing a scientific article, in which I need to describe the main drivers of a certain phenomenon.I would like to say that the driver X plays an important role at modifying Y. But my supervisor corrected me to: driver X plays an important role in modifying Y.Which one is correct? None of us are native English speakers, which makes it a bit tricky. If your concern is whether the word is given credence in highly regarded dictionaries, Oxford English Dictionary can resolve the issue. The OED does, in fact, define "role" as a transitive verb in the fashion you are describing. role v. trans. -- To provide with a role indicator. Cited use: The presence of the connective merely ensures that the first word in the multi-word phrase is roled and stored. Roled is marked as a derivative word, so you would be safe in the realm of English using the word in this fashion. It's worth noting that the word is provided with a context: Computing. rare. So if you are more concerned with being understood by a layperson than you are with using sanctioned English words, you might avoid using "role" in this way. The OED offers no definition under "rolled" for this meaning, and none that is cross-referenced to the verb "role" or "roled." As an Englishman, I always use rle, despite Microsoft's disapproval! I think there may be something of a US/UK difference on this one. The OED lists both spellings without distinction. The evolution of language is somewhat quirky. One never sees the word "hotel" written with a circumflex in English, as it is in French, but some people still insist on writing "an hotel" despite the fact that we, unlike the French, do voice the "h". It sounds particularly silly when someone says "an hotel", pronouncing the "h". I expect the circumflex in rle will eventually be completely dropped, but it is still generally considered more proper in the UK. Locked. Comments on this question have been disabled, but it is still accepting new answers and other interactions. Learn more. From Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English:play a part/roletto have an effect or influence on somethingDoes this phrase come from the theater or somewhere else?From thefreedictionary.com:play a role in (something)2. Literally, to have a job portraying a certain character in a performance.If a person is an actor and plays a role in a theatrical performance, this does not make him an important person. In a play, he can be replaced by someone else, maybe even by someone better than him. In addition, there are simple, insignificant roles that anyone can play at all, not even a professional actor. Thus, playing a role in a play does not mean being important, irreplaceable, and influential.Moreover, "to play a role" means to be not real, because a person does not play himself on stage. He plays a literary character. He is not himself.However, this phrase is used in a serious way to mean involvement and influence.Is this a metaphor? What is the comparison here?From theanalyst.com as an example:He played a major role in Bayerns ninth consecutive championship... means: He was an actor who played a major role in the play "Bayerns ninth consecutive championship". He is not himself because he played a role. He's just an actor, nothing really depends on him. The play does not change the plot if the major role is played by someone else.It turns out that the figurative meaning of the metaphor is almost completely opposite to the literal one. However, a metaphor must use an analogy, a metaphor is not irony to use an opposite meaning.What is the etymology or origin of the phrase play a part/role? AddendumAccording to etymonline.com:Meaning "to take part in" a martial or athletic game is from c. 1200.It has been opposed to work (v.) since late 14c.Thus, before its theatrical meaning, the word "play" meant participation in a competitive game.Could it be that "play a part" originally referred to competitive games? "Play a part" could mean to participate in a competition individually or as part of a team. In this case, the person is himself, and victory or defeat really depends on him.Then, with the growing popularity of theater, "play a part" was mistakenly associated with a performance of a role. "Play a part" in a competitive game was confused with "play a part" in a theatrical performance. This is how "play a role" appeared with an absurd theatrical figurative meaning, in which there is no logical connection with its literal meaning.However, this is just my hypothesis. I would like to describe someone's role in the company.My editor and I disagree on the use of "as" vs "of" in the sentenceX also plays a role as (job-function)vsX also plays a role of (job-function).My opinion is that "plays a role as" indicates a greater impact on the role and the company, whereas "plays a role of" is more "does the job".My old dictionary of English language haven't helped and a google search says the "of"-use is the most common, but is also mostly used differently than what I propose.Thoughts? 6 Closed. This question is off-topic. It is not currently accepting answers. Though I am a native English speaker, I am having trouble deciding between "role" and "roles" in the phrase below. The roles of the two parties involved in a legal proceeding, peculiar to the adversarial system of trial, can help circumscribe whether or not a trial proceeds in a fair and unbiased fashion. I would appreciate it if you could let me know which one is correct. Thanks a lot!

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