

MISPLACED MODIFIERS



WHAT IS A MISPLACED MODIFIER?

A misplaced modifier is a word or phrase incorrectly separated from the word it modifies. Correcting misplaced modifiers is easy: just move the modifier closer to the word it modifies. Because word order is often important to the meaning of a sentence, a modifier, be it a phrase or a word, should be placed as close as possible to the word it modifies.



EXAMPLE WITH CORRECTLY PLACED MODIFIER

Loud singing annoys you quickly.

Here, it is clear that you are quickly annoyed.



EXAMPLE WITH MISPLACED MODIFIER

Loud singing quickly annoys me.

Here, it is unclear if quickly modifies loud singing or if it modifies how fast you are annoyed.



MISPLACED MODIFIERS – SINGLE WORDS/ LIMITING MODIFIERS

The following words are often misplaced: almost, only, just, even, hardly, not, nearly, merely.

Most often, these words are placed in front of the words they modify.

Misplaced: My sister only has two children.

Correct: My sister has only two children.

MISPLACED MODIFIERS - PHRASES

Here is an example of a **misplaced phrase** (a phrase does not contain a subject and a verb)

Misplaced: The little girl screamed **at the library** at her mother.

Correct: At the library, the little girl screamed at her mother.



MISPLACED MODIFIERS – CLAUSES

Here is an example of a **misplaced clause**. (a clause contains a subject and a verb))

Misplaced: I held the ticket tightly in my hand **that my friend gave me**.

Correct: I held the ticket **that my friend gave me** tightly in my hand.

SQUINTING MODIFIERS

It is a word or phrase placed in a position so that it modifies either a preceding word or the word after it.

Incorrect: Reading a book frequently will change the whole course of a man's life.

Correct: Reading a book will frequently change the whole course of a man's life.



SPLIT INFINITIVES

A modifier of one or more words placed between the "to" and the root verb.

InCorrect: It was my custom to at least once a month visit my grandmother.

Correct: It was my custom to visit my grandmother at least once a month.



DANGLING MODIFIERS

A **dangling modifier** is a modifier that lacks a word or group of words to modify. Usually, a dangling modifier is found near the beginning of the sentence and starts with either a *verb + ing* or a *to + verb* phrase.

For e.g. *Sighing with sadness, the expensive shoes were returned to the salesman.*



DANGLING MODIFIERS

For e.g. *Sighing with sadness, the expensive shoes were returned to the salesman.*

Who sighed with sadness, the expensive shoes or the salesman?

STEP 1: Find the modifier: *sighing with sadness*

STEP 2: Decide what word the modifier was intended to modify: /

STEP 3: Revise the sentence. To correct a dangling modifier, you cannot simply rearrange the sentence. You must add the word that the dangling modifier describes:

Sighing with sadness, I returned the expensive shoes to the salesman.





THANKS...