



Placing Modifiers



Modifiers work best when they are near what they modify.

Example: I saw a man walking down the road.

If you wanted to add the adjective *tall* to the sentence, where would you add it? The best place is next to the noun or pronoun that it describes. The nouns and pronouns in the sentence are *I*, *man* and *road*. It would be incorrect to say *tall I*. *Tall road* doesn't make sense. So you would add it before *man*.

I saw a tall man walking down the road.

Below are sentences with a word or phrase in parentheses. Rewrite each sentence adding the word or phrase.

1. Ellen put her homework on the table. (wooden)

2. In the evening the zebras came to the river to drink. (thirsty)

3. The sun blazed down on the travelers. (hotly)

4. James ate popcorn at the movie. (noisily)

5. The rain flooded the town. (that fell in April)

6. Mia ran to school. (who was late).

7. The lady petted her cat. (which purred softly)

8. The boy ran to the nurse. (with the bloody nose)



Name: _____

Correcting Misplaced Modifiers

If a modifier appears in the wrong place in a sentence, the meaning of the sentence may be confusing. A modifier that is incorrectly placed is called a misplaced modifier. In most cases a modifier should be near the word or phrase it modifies.

Example 1: Charles saw a dog on the way to the library.

This sentence seems to say that the dog was going to the library. It's unlikely that a dog would go to the library. It really means Charles was going to the library. The sentence should be rewritten as:

On the way to the library, Charles saw a dog.

It would be even more confusing if there were two humans in the sentence.

Example 2: Charles saw Ava on the way to the library.

This sentence says that Ava was going to the library, which is possible. If it was Charles who was going to the library, the sentence would be clearer this way:

On the way to the library, Charles saw Ava.

Correct the misplaced modifiers in the following sentences.

1. They gave a cat to my sister named Fluffy.

2. The student was punished by the teacher who cheated on the test.

3. Chased by a lion, the photographers saw a terrified gazelle.

4. The pilot wore a uniform to fly the plane that was covered in gold buttons.

5. Three homes were reported burned by the fire department in July.

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Correcting Dangling Modifiers

Sometimes in a sentence it is difficult to tell what a modifying word or phrase is describing. That modifying word or phrase is called a dangling modifier.

Example: Working hard all afternoon in the kitchen, the cake I baked tasted terrible.

Working hard all afternoon in the kitchen is a modifying phrase. It is difficult, however, to understand who or what worked hard: *the cake* or *I*. Obviously the cake can't work hard, so the phrase must be modifying *I*. This confusion is the basis of a dangling modifier.

Correcting a dangling modifier often requires more than just moving words around. Usually the correction requires adding a word or phrase or rewording the sentence.

I worked hard all afternoon in the kitchen, and the cake I baked tasted terrible.

OR

Even after working hard all afternoon in the kitchen, I baked a terrible tasting cake.

Rewrite each of the following sentences correcting the dangling modifier.

1. After centuries of lying on the ocean floor, the treasure hunters found the Spanish galleon.

2. Watching carefully for hours, the flock of butterflies never arrived.

3. Thirsty, the glass of water was swallowed in one gulp.

4. Driving down the street, the park came into view.

5. Resolving to study more, the textbooks seemed more interesting.

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Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers

Rewrite each of the following sentences correcting the modifier errors. You may have to add additional words or phrases.

1. Scrambling for the touchdown, the ball was dropped on the 10 yard line.

2. She saw the ghost glancing out the window.

3. Reaching the advanced age of eight, my grandmother thought it was time to teach me to cook.

4. Screaming for help, the rescuers were nowhere to be found.

5. Like most pets, our teacher says goldfish require good care.

6. After running to school, the bell still rang before Clarence got there.

7. The book was very boring in the library.

8. They said it was going to snow on the television.
