

## Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers

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**A modifier** is a word or group of words that modify something. **Example:** I love strawberry kool-aid. In this case, strawberry is the modifier. It modifies (tells what kind) of kool-aid.

**Misplaced modifiers** modify the wrong word, or they seem to modify more than one word in a sentence. To correct a misplaced modifier, **move the modifier as close as possible to the word it modifies.**

modifier  
↓  
Misplaced: **Floating in the wind**, Hannah stared wistfully at the kite. (Hannah was not floating in the wind)

Clear: Hannah stared wistfully at the kite **floating in the wind.**

\*In this case, the modifier was just moved to object it modifies (the kite).

Misplaced: A **new man's** suit was in the closet. (The man was not new)  
Clear: A **man's new** suit was in the closet.

Misplaced: He bought a Great Dane from a neighbor **that was already housebroken.** (The neighbor was not housebroken)  
Clear: He bought a Great Dane **that was already housebroken** from a neighbor.

Misplaced: I read your editorial about juvenile delinquents **with enthusiasm.** (The delinquents did not have enthusiasm)  
Clear: I read **with enthusiasm** your editorial about juvenile delinquents.

**Dangling modifiers** seem logically to modify no word at all (a word seems missing). To correct a dangling modifier, **add a word the dangling phrase can sensibly modify.**

modifier  
↓  
Dangling: **Working all night long**, sleep was welcome.

modifier  
↓  
Clear: **Working all night long**, Frank welcomed sleep.

Dangling: **After a valiant effort** the blaze still raged uncontrollably.

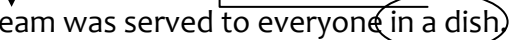
Clear: **After a valiant effort** the firefighters still faced a blaze that raged uncontrollably.

## Practice

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Circle each **misplaced modifying phrase** and draw an arrow to the word it should modify. If the sentence is correct, place a C in the blank.

**Example:** Ice cream was served to everyone in a dish.



- \_\_\_\_\_ Standing in the cool shower, the summer heat didn't feel so intense to Danny.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Daydreaming quietly, Carrie was reflecting on her wonderful excursion to Bermuda.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Climbing down from their seats, the stands seemed to sway slightly as people left.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Every week while doing yard work, the mower seems to break down for Carl.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Nicole and Isabella helped prepare for the prom, working as hard as possible.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Trying not to scratch herself, Lorena was miserable because of the poison ivy.

Rewrite the following sentences to correct the **dangling modifiers**. Remember, with dangling modifiers, you usually have to add a word. Think about what needs to be modified or clarified.

**Example:** To impress his instructor, Derek's essay was written on a computer.  
Derek, trying to impress his instructor, wrote his essay on a computer.

- At five years of age, my parents gave me a tricycle.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Running up the three flights of stairs, my heart felt as though it might burst.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- When on vacation, the bills piled up.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Swimming in the ocean, my eyes were irritated by the salt water.  
\_\_\_\_\_

Rewrite the following sentences by **correctly placing the modifiers**.

**Example:** Janice presented her new book to the faculty, which was full of academic anecdotes.  
Janice presented her new book, which was full of academic anecdotes, to the faculty.

- Brian discovered that he enjoyed writing after awhile.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Professor Atkins is an expert on volcanoes from the University of Colorado.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Rosa received flowers from Fred that will never wilt.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Lola selected a donut from the bakery filled with banana cream.  
\_\_\_\_\_