

## Modifiers

Modifiers are words, phrases, or sentence elements that limit, clarify, further describe, or qualify the meaning of another word, phrase, or element in the sentence. The purpose of the modifier, and the element it is intended to modify, should be clear to the reader. A misplaced modifier is a phrase or clause that functions as an adjective but does not modify or refer logically to any specific element in the sentence, or the modifier is placed too far away from its intended subject. A dangling modifier is a type of misplaced modifier. Dangling modifiers are usually introductory word groups that suggest but do not name the subject doing something in the sentence. To repair a misplaced modifier, either name the subject immediately following the modifier, revise the modifier into a word group that names the subject, or restructure the sentence to properly position the modifier.

### Examples and Suggested Revisions

Example: *Warm and full of seasonal fruits, the bakers featured assorted pies that were displayed for the judges' votes.*

(Due to the proximity of its modifying clause, this sentence incorrectly suggests that the bakers were warm and full of fruit, rather than the pies.)

Possible Revision 1: Warm and full of seasonal fruits, the assorted pies were displayed by the bakers for the judges' votes.

Possible Revision 2: The bakers featured assorted pies, warm and full of seasonal fruits, which were displayed for the judges' votes.

(The revisions indicate that the pies had these attributes.)

Example: *After ordering my food, the pizza was too cold.*

(This sentence incorrectly implies that the pizza was ordering the food.)

Possible Revision 1: After ordering my food, I realized that the pizza was too cold.

Possible Revision 2: When I received the food that I had ordered, the pizza was too cold.

(Both revised sentences indicate that "I" ordered the food and realized that the pizza was too cold.)

### Dangling Modifiers Explained

A **dangling modifier** is a phrase or clause that serves as an adjective for an understood subject in the sentence but functions to mistakenly modify another word in the sentence.

Dangling modifiers are usually introductory word groups that suggest but do not name the intended subject. The primary distinction between the terms *misplaced modifier* and *dangling modifier* focuses on proximity vs. absence: misplaced modifiers are too far away from the sentence elements they are intended to modify, while a dangling modifier's intended subject is absent from the sentence. To repair a dangling modifier, you can revise the sentence in one of two ways:

1. Name the correct subject of the modifier immediately following the introductory phrase.
2. Turn the modifier into a word group that names the subject.

## Examples and Suggested Revisions

Dangling modifier: *Upon entering the hospital, a CPR mannequin caught my attention.*  
(This sentence suggests that the mannequin entered the hospital.)

Possible Revision 1: Upon entering the hospital, I noticed a CPR mannequin.

Possible Revision 2: As I entered the hospital, a CPR mannequin caught my attention.

(Both revised sentences indicate that “I” entered the hospital and noticed the mannequin.)

Dangling modifier: *As Christian counselors, it is important to reflect grace and mercy.*  
(This sentence has an introductory clause that incorrectly modifies the pronoun “it.”)

Possible Revision 1: As Christian counselors, professionals in the counseling field must reflect grace and mercy.

Possible Revision 2: Christian counselors recognize the importance of reflecting grace and mercy.

## Practice

***Revise the following sentences to correct the misplaced/dangling modifiers.***

1. Relieved of your responsibilities at your job, your home should be a place to relax.
2. While working as a ranger in everglades National Park, a Florida panther crossed the road in front of my truck one night.
3. Not having studied the lab manual carefully, the experiment was a failure.
4. While driving on Greenwood Avenue yesterday afternoon, a tree began to fall on Wendy’s car.
5. The article remains unconvincing after reading the original study.
6. Left out in the cold all night, the owners brought the puppies into the barn with the horses.
7. As cities with declining populations, it becomes even more critical for mayors to attract new businesses to settle in their cities.

### ***Suggested Revisions to Practice Sentences:***

1. Your home should be a place to relax when you’ve been relieved of your responsibilities at your job.
2. While working as a ranger in Everglades National Park, I encountered a Florida panther that crossed the road in front of my truck one night.
3. Not having studied the lab manual carefully, the scientists learned their experiment was a failure.
4. While driving on Greenwood Road yesterday afternoon, Wendy saw a tree begin to fall on her car.
5. After reading the original study, I found the article remained unconvincing.
6. The owners brought the puppies, who had been left out in the cold all night, into the barn with the horses.
7. Mayors of cities with declining populations are finding it even more critical for them to attract new businesses to settle in their cities.