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A modifier is a word or participial phrase that provides more information about something being discussed in the sentence. Sometimes, modifiers can get lost or misplaced in a sentence. When this happens, things can get very confusing! Keep reading for examples of this common grammatical error, as well as a helpful misplaced and dangling modifiers worksheet for extra practice.

misplaced and dangling modifiers examples

Misplaced and dangling modifiers may be confusing, but they're easy to fix. The trick is knowing which type of modifier you're dealing with. That depends on the noun that you're modifying and how close it is to its modifier. A misplaced modifier is a modifier that is in the wrong place. As a result, it appears to modify the wrong noun.

Misplaced: The salesman tried to sell a car to a customer that was broken down. (Broken down is the modifier, but because it's closest to customer, it sounds like the customer is broken down instead of the car.) Corrected: The salesman tried to sell a broken-down car to a customer.

Misplaced: Mrs. Harris hung the lovely student's drawing on the wall. (Lovely should modify drawing, but it sounds like it modifies student instead.) Corrected: Mrs. Harris hung the student's lovely drawing on the wall.

Misplaced: Let's adopt the dog from the animal shelter with black spots. (Placing the phrase with black spots after shelter instead of dog makes it sound like the shelter has black spots.) Corrected: Let's adopt the dog with black spots from the animal shelter.

A dangling modifier modifies a noun or verb that never actually appears in the sentence. Correcting dangling modifiers require a bit more editing than rearranging words; you need to add the noun or verb that the modifier is describing.

Misplaced: Expecting rain, the umbrella was propped up against the wall. (The umbrella can't expect rain. The person who was expecting rain, and who propped the umbrella against the wall, is missing from the sentence.) Corrected: Expecting rain, Nancy propped the umbrella against the wall.

Misplaced: Holding the mail in one hand, the door was locked. (The door can't hold the mail in one hand. Without another subject, the sentence doesn't make sense.) Corrected: Holding the mail in one hand, I realized that the door was locked.

Misplaced: After leaving the office, the cat jumped right in front of Howard. (Did the cat leave the office? Who did?) Corrected: After leaving the office, Howard startled when a cat jumped right in front of him.

Read the five sentences listed below. Decide whether the sentence is a misplaced modifier (M), a dangling modifier (D) or is correct (C). You can also download and print a complete dangling and misplaced modifiers exercises with answers below.

1. Always eager for cake, the birthday party was attended by everyone.
2. Water from the sprinklers started to rust the brand-new child's bike.
3. Driving to the party, the present rattled around in the trunk.
4. Forgetting that the microphone was on, the whole audience heard the singer's fight with his wife.
5. Wagging her tail, the puppy climbed into my lap.

This misplaced and dangling modifiers worksheet features 10 identification questions similar to the exercise above. It also has a section for writing corrected version of these sentences. [View & Download PDF](#) How did you do on the five practice questions? Check your answers below.

1. (M) Always eager for cake is modifying everyone. Corrected: Always eager for cake, everyone attended the birthday party.
2. (M) Brand-new should modify bike, not child. Corrected: Water from the sprinklers started to rust the child's brand-new bike.
3. (D) The present is not driving. Corrected: Driving to the party, we heard the present rattling around in the trunk.
4. (D) The singer is the person who forgot the microphone was on. Corrected: Forgetting that the microphone was on, the singer fought with his wife for the whole audience to hear.
5. (C) This is correct. The puppy was the one wagging her tail.

Checking for misplaced and dangling modifiers is a great start to making writing understandable. If you'd like more ways to clarify your communication, learn when you should eliminate passive voice in your writing. You can also check out a quick slideshow that provides tips for cleaning up your vocabulary and word choice. [Staff Writer Correcting Misplaced Modifiers](#)

Modifiers are words or phrases that provide additional detail about a subject, verb or object in a sentence. Modifiers can be words or phrases; for example, the word "pretty" can modify "girl," and the phrase "who was smart" can also modify "girl." According to the rules of grammar, modifiers should be placed as close as possible to the person or thing that they are modifying. When a modifier is not placed properly in the sentence, it can create confusion and is considered to be a "misplaced modifier." [The Participial Phrase Explained \(With Examples\)](#)

Do you ever get your verbals mixed up? It's hard to tell the difference between gerunds, infinitives and participles, but once you identify how they're used, you'll figure it out in no time. [Learn more about participles](#) — and the participial phrases formed with multiple words — with these explanations and examples. Misplaced modifiers are often funny, but they are also wrong! In this worksheet your student will correct the misplaced modifiers in sentences. It's perfect for practicing Common Core Standards for Language for 7th grade, but other students in other grades may also use it. In order to continue enjoying our site, we ask that you confirm your identity as a human. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

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