

Modifier Placement: Avoiding Dangling and Misplaced Modifiers

Dangling Modifiers: A modifier that begins a sentence must be followed immediately by the word it is meant to describe. If it is not, the modifier is said to be *dangling*, and the sentence takes on an unintended meaning.

While eating popcorn, my cat sat with me and watched a movie.

Fix 1: *While eating popcorn, I* sat with my cat and watched a movie.

Fix 2: *While I ate popcorn and watched a movie,* my cat sat with me.

Practice:

1. After eating a nutritious lunch, the lecture didn't seem as long and boring.

2. Covered with rust, my brother decided to trade in his old car.

3. Hiking to the top of the mountain, the cold rain stung my face.

Misplaced Modifier: Place a modifier as close as possible to what it is intended to describe.

Jane bought a new table from a **carpenter** *with a scratched surface*.

Jane bought a new **table** *with a scratched surface* from a carpenter.

Practice:

1. Shirley returned the omelet to the waitress that was rotten and smelly.

2. Ralph swatted the fly with a newspaper that was buzzing around him obnoxiously.

3. Hitting the brakes suddenly, the baby seat fell forward onto the floor.
