**Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers**

Place modifiers as close as possible to the words they modify in order to make the meaning of the sentence clear.

**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.

Misplaced: **Floating in the wind,** Hannah stared wistfully at the kite.

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

Misplaced: A **new man’s** suit was in the closet. Clear: A **man’s new** suit was in the closet.

**Dangling modifiers** seem logically to modify no word at all. To correct a dangling modifier, supply a word the dangling phrase can sensibly modify.

Dangling: **Working all night long,** sleep was welcome. Clear: **Working all night long,** Francis welcomed sleep.

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

Clear: **After a valiant effort** the fire-fighters still faced a blaze that raged uncontrollably.

If the word *only* is not placed immediately before the word or group of words it modifies, the meaning can be unclear.

Unclear: Dan only has art on Monday.

Clear: Dan has only art on Monday. **OR**: Dan has art only on Monday. **OR**: Only Dan has art on Monday.

**Exercise 1 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.**

Ice cream was served to everyone in a dish.

**1.** Proposing new menus, healthier school lunches would be offered by the new dietitian.

**2.** Standing in the cool shower, the summer heat didn’t feel so intense to Danilo.

**3.** Throw Mama from the train a kiss.

**4.** Listening to the scanner, the accident sounded extremely serious to Kent.

**5.** Daydreaming quietly, Kai was reflecting on her wonderful excursion to Bermuda.

**6.** Climbing down from their seats, the stands seemed to sway slightly as people left.

**7.** Every week while doing the yard work, the mower seems to break down for Carl.

**8.** Nicole and Isra helped prepare for the prom, working as hard as possible.

**9.** Trying not to scratch herself, Lorena was miserable because of the poison ivy.

**10.** Two deer were spotted by the hunters licking the block of salt in the pasture.

**11.** Thomas developed pictures for the newspaper of the football games.

**12.** Climbing into bed, the tornado siren began to blow, scaring the children.

**13.** At noon, Karen encountered heavy traffic driving to the bank.

**14.** Erin must have found at least ten sources researching her term paper.

**15.** A delicious lunch with all the trimmings was served to the staff.

**16.** The president waved to the thousands of people riding in his black limousine.

**17.** The bears began eating their meal of ants rising from their afternoon naps.

**18.** With great energy, the horses entered the race track.

**19.** Stumbling over another player’s foot, the crowd gasped as the receiver ran on for a touchdown.

**20.** Circling overhead, the hawk was searching for its next meal.

**Exercise 2 Circle any misplaced or dangling modifier. If the sentence is correct, place a *C* in the blank.**

While rafting, the supplies had no chance of staying dry.

**1.** Sleeping soundly, the alarm clock startled me with its harsh ringing.

**2.** Walking along the beach, a shell cut Harry’s foot.

**3.** Catching sight of our friends, we waved frantically.

**4.** While mowing the yard, the mail carrier’s horn announced his presence.

**5.** Driving along the freeway, the deer ran into the woods.

**6.** Needing a ride to the airport, Mrs. Wiggins called a taxi.

**7.** Because I was shy, I had some difficulty making new friends.

**8.** After standing in line for half an hour, the clerk announced that the store was closed.

**9.** A story was told to the children with a happy ending.

**10.** Working at my desk, the sudden noise was startling.

**11.** Gloating over his victory, Bill bored the other wrestlers with his bragging.

**12.** Running home, my heel came off my shoe.

**13.** Draining the radiator, I replaced the antifreeze.

**14.** Lost in the woods, survival was uppermost in our minds.

**15.** Lying on the couch, my snack fell to the floor.

**16.** Reading intently, her entrance broke my concentration.

**17.** Savoring each moment, Eileen and Tracy watched the sunset.

**18.** A holiday was given to the employees with pay.

**19.** Walking in the woods, a squirrel darted across Tanya’s path, startling her.

**20.** After smiling at his girlfriend, Achim’s solo went very well.

**21.** As a successful attorney, Andrea was widely sought.

**22.** Tired and hungry, a meal and a bed sounded good to me.

**Exercise 3 Insert a caret (^) to show where the word *only* should be placed to match the meaning in parentheses.**

I watch cartoons on Saturday mornings. (I do nothing else on Saturday mornings.)

**1.** The green truck was speeding down the gravel road. (There was no other green truck.)

**2.** The green truck was speeding down the gravel road. (No more than one truck was speeding.)

**3.** The green truck was speeding down the gravel road. (There was no other gravel road.)

**4.** Potatoes are the main product of Idaho. (No other state has potatoes as a main product.)

**5.** Potatoes are the main product of Idaho. (There is no other major product from Idaho.)

**6.** Kerry played soccer while attending Northridge High. (Kerry participated in no other sport.)

**7.** Kerry played soccer while attending Northridge High. (Kerry did nothing else but play soccer while in high school.)

**8.** Jeanne liked to drive her convertible. (No one enjoyed driving the convertible except Jeanne.)

**9.** Jeanne liked to drive her convertible. (Jeanne didn’t like driving if the car was not her convertible.)

**10.** Esther got three books from the library. (No one got the same number of books as Esther.)

**11.** Esther got three books from the library. (Esther got no more than three books.)

**12.** Rover was Adam’s pride and joy. (Rover was the one thing in which Adam took delight.)

**13.** Rover was Adam’s pride and joy. (The other members of the family didn’t care as much for

Rover as Adam did.)

**14.** Airplanes are Linda’s favourite mode of transportation for long trips. (Linda will make long trips on nothing but an airplane.)

**15.** Airplanes are Linda’s favourite mode of transportation for long trips. (When the trip is short, Linda prefers some other form of travel.)

**16.** I bought Dad a screwdriver set for Christmas. (No one else got Dad a screwdriver set.)

**17.** I bought Dad a screwdriver set for Christmas. (I bought screwdrivers for no one but Dad.)

**18.** I bought Dad a screwdriver set for Christmas. (I bought one thing for Dad.)

**Writing Link**

**Write a paragraph about a family outing. Correctly use 2 or 3 modifying phrases and circle them. Use the word *only* at least once.**

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