

## Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers

Modifiers add information to an element in a sentence. A modifier can be an adverb, an adjective, or a phrase or clauses acting as an adverb or adjective.

**Misplaced:** Modifiers should be kept close to the word they modify to avoid confusion (Bedford 160-164).

**Incorrect:** I only ate one apple.

(Only modifies apple, not the verb. This sentence reads as though an apple is all I ate today. The modifier should limit the number of apples not what I have eaten.)

**Correct:** I ate only one apple.

**Incorrect:** There is a picture of my sister playing soccer on my desk.

(My sister is not playing soccer on my desk. It is the picture that is on the desk.)

**Correct:** On my desk is a picture of my sister playing soccer.

**Dangling:** Dangling modifiers fail to refer to any word in the sentence (Bedford 165-169).

**Incorrect:** After getting accepted into Stanford, Mr. Nelson took his daughter to dinner.

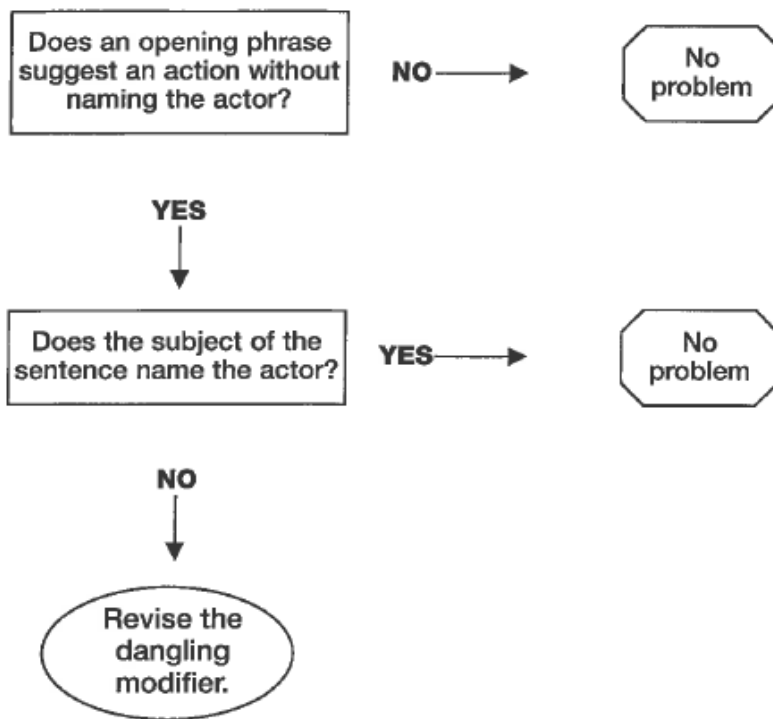
(This sentence fails to address who got accepted to Stanford.)

**Correct:** Mr. Nelson took his daughter to dinner after she got accepted into Stanford.

### Need More Help?

- Bedford : pgs. 160-169 (exercises on page 164 and 168)
- Explanation:  
<http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/grammar/modifiers.html>  
<http://www.writingcentre.uottawa.ca/hypergrammar/msplmod.html>
- Online Quizzes:  
[http://aliscot.com/bigdog/dmmm\\_exercise.htm](http://aliscot.com/bigdog/dmmm_exercise.htm)  
<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/modifiers.htm>

## Checking for dangling modifiers



**EXERCISE 12-2** Edit the following sentences to correct dangling modifiers. Most sentences can be revised in more than one way. Example:

*a student must complete*  
To acquire a degree in almost any field, <sup>^</sup>two science courses <sup>^</sup>~~must be completed.~~

- a. At the age of ten, my parents took me on my first balloon ride.
  - b. To replace the gear mechanism, attached is a form to order the part by mail.
  - c. Nestled in the cockpit, the pounding of the engine was muffled only slightly by my helmet.
  - d. After studying polymer chemistry, computer games seemed less complex to **Phuong**.
  - e. When a young man, my mother enrolled me in tap dance classes, hoping I would become the next Savion Glover.
1. While working as a ranger in Everglades National Park, a Florida panther crossed the road in front of my truck one night.
  2. By following this new procedure, our mailing costs will be reduced significantly.
  3. Serving as president of the missionary circle, one of Grandmother's duties is to raise money for the church.
  4. After buying an album by Ali Farka Toure, the rich and rolling rhythms of Malian music made more sense to **Silas**.
  5. Understanding the high-tech needs of drivers, the Volkswagen Phaeton has an innovative dashboard design.