**Misplaced & Dangling Modifiers**

**Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers Guidelines**

2 pages long(ELC charges 10 cents/page for print jobs)

Modifiers are words, phrases, or clauses used as adjectives or adverbs. Modifiers must refer to a specific word in a sentence. A dangling modifier has no clear connection to the sentence. When modifiers are incorrectly placed in a sentence, they don't describe the words they are intended to describe.

Modification is most effective when it adheres to these principles:

1. The purpose of a modifier is to change and refine the meaning of other words in the sentence.

2. Adjectives modify nouns and pronouns. Adjectives typically are found beside the words they refer to, though the adjectives used as subject complements depart from this pattern. For example, in the sentence, “Darla is pretty,” the subject complement, “pretty,” is not found beside the noun it modifies, “Darla.”

3. Adverbs modify the meaning of verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. They also appear near the words they modify. For example, in the sentence, “Joe ran quickly,” the adverb “quickly” appears near the word “run,” which it modifies.

4. A misplaced modifier is too far removed from the word to which it refers. It attaches to whatever is nearby, often distorting the meaning or creating a ridiculous statement. For example, in the sentence, “The boy ran by my house who was shooting a water gun,” the placement of the modifying phrase, “who was shooting a water gun,” makes it sound like the house was shooting the water gun instead of the boy. The sentence becomes clear when the modifying phrase is repositioned: The boy, who was shooting a water gun, ran by my house.

5. As often as possible, place modifiers near the words they modify.

6. Seldom separate subjects and predicates and complements with long modifiers.

7. Pay special attention to opening phrases, especially verbal phrases, because they can so easily become dangling modifiers.

8. A dangling modifier has no logical word to which it refers. In the most common cases, dangling modifiers involve verbal phrases at the beginnings of sentences. Immediately after these phrases, the logical reference must be provided.

9. We correct dangling modifiers by rewriting the sentences in which they appear. The examples below illustrate these revisions:

DANGLING Being crowded in the car, the trip was uncomfortable. [Dangling participle phrase.]

REVISED : Being crowded in the car, we were uncomfortable.

REVISED : Because we were crowded in the car, the trip was uncomfortable.

DANGLING After unlocking the door , the cat refused to go out. [Dangling prepositional phrase]

REVISED: A fter I had unlocked the door, the cat refused to go out.

DANGLING To take sharp action pictures , the shutter speed should be fast. [Dangling infinitive phrase.]

REVISED : To take sharp action pictures, a photographer needs a fast shutter speed.

REVISED: If a photographer wants to take sharp action pictures, the shutter speed should be fast.

DANGLING Though still in the hospital, the stitches were removed from Larry's wound. [Dangling elliptical clause.]

REVISED: Though still in the hospital,. Larry had the stitches removed from his wound.

REVISED: Though Larry was still in the hospital, the stitches were removed from his wound.

**Misplaced & Dangling Modifiers Grammar Module Activities**

1 page long ( ELC charges 10 cents/page for print jobs)

Instructions: Read the Guidelines Sheet for Misplaced & Dangling Modifiers before you complete the following activities. The Extended Learning Center provides all the videos and books you will need to complete these activities.

Tutoring: You may see a tutor for help with understanding any of the following activities

Activities:

1. The Allyn and Bacon Video Grammar Library , Lesson 6: Dangling and Misplaced Modifiers: Watch the video and write a ½ page summary of what you have learned.

2. SkillsBank: To enter the computer program at Lone Star College–Tomball, click the SkillsBank Icon. At Lone Star College–Willow Chase Center, click the “Start” button in the bottom left-hand corner of your screen. Select “Learning Assistance” and then “SkillsBank.” Log in to SkillsBank with your assigned user name and identification number. In SkillsBank, select “Writing” from the column of subjects on the left of the screen and then “Clear Writing & Paragraphs” from the list of lesson topics across the top.

Do Lessons 1 (“Misplaced Modifiers”) and 2 (“Dangling Modifiers”)

Your scores will automatically be reported to your instructor, so you will not need to print out a record of your activities.

Grammar textbook work: Do not write in the textbooks. Either photocopy exercise pages from the text or complete assignments on your own paper (writing short answers whenever possible, rather than copying entire sentences).

3. The Little, Brown Handbook (8 th edition) : Read Chapter 21 (pages 396-406) and complete Exercises 1, 3, and 6.

4. Odyssey (3 rd edition) : Read pages 433-439 (beginning with “Avoiding Dangling and Misplaced Modifiers”) and complete Exercises 27.6 and 27.7.

5. Writer's Choice : Read pages 400-401 and 660-665 and complete Exercise 16 (page 663) and your choice of Exercise 17 (page 664) or Exercise 18 (page 665).

6. Worksheets: Complete Worksheets D56 and D55 (the next pages in this document). Use the answer keys, located in the Extended Learning Center, to check your work.

Turn in all work assigned by your instructor to the ELC staff member on duty before taking the Misplaced & Dangling Modifiers Test.

**Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers**

**PRACTICE TEST**

(3 pages, 10¢/page for print jobs in ELC)

Directions : In the following sentences determine if there is a misplaced or dangling modifier. Mark your answer as follows:

“A” if the sentence does not contain a misplaced or dangling modifier

“B” if the sentence does contain a misplaced or dangling modifier.

1. Riding the bicycle, the dog bit the man's ankle.

2. The phone almost rang fifteen times.

3. Walking down the country lane, the leaves blew over my shoes.

4. Molly took a nap after hanging wallpaper in the dining room.

5. It takes as much time nearly to clean the kitchen as it does to cook dinner.

6. Learning all about candidates for public office can, when the election is approaching, be very exciting.

7. While running a bicycle shop in the neighborhood, Mr. Johnson helped many kids learn to ride their bikes.

8. Preparing the room to be painted, it took many drop cloths and masking tape.

9. The boy hit the pavement hard riding a motorcycle.

10. After finding gold in 1849, the California area became heavily populated.

11. The mines attracted many prospectors, filled with gold.

12. Children need games or movies to occupy them on trips that are very long.

13. The patent expiring on the special brand of cleaner opened the way for other companies to make similar products.

14. The architecture perfected by Frank Lloyd Wright, many architects tried unsuccessfully to imitate it.

15. Driving down the street, the child became bored and began to scream and cry.

16. Thought well of, millions of people bought the movie Dances With Wolves .

17. The young men's hearing because of excessively loud music was seriously impaired.

18. The paintings in the museum were quite beautiful, and many people went to see them.

19. Patients at the popular clinic should take something to read since the wait to get in is so long.

20. Developed by the scientists at the famous medical school, many children received the new vaccine.

Answer Key: Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers Practice Test

1. B

2. B

3. B

4. A

5. B

6. B

7. A

8. B

9. B

10. B

11. B

12. A

13. A

14. B

15. B

16. B

17. B

18. A

19. A

20. B