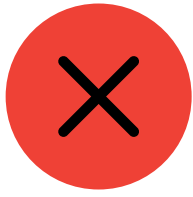


# Dangling Modifiers

A dangling modifier is a word or phrase describing a subject that is missing from the sentence. This can lead the reader to misinterpret what the author means and apply the modifier to the wrong subject. Usually, this can be fixed by adding the missing subject back into the sentence. Let's look at some examples of sentences with dangling modifiers!



**Studying in the library, Camino crashed suddenly.**

Because this sentence is missing a subject in the first clause, it seems as though Camino was studying in the library, which probably wasn't what the writer meant.



**As I was studying in the library, Camino crashed suddenly.**

By adding the phrase "As I was," the modifier has been connected with the subject it's describing ("I"). Now the sentence is clear.

**My mother dropped me off at college at 18 years old.**

In this sentence, the dangling modifier, "at 18 years old," makes it unclear who was 18: the mother or the speaker. Because we're missing a subject, we don't know who is 18 years old.

**My mother dropped me off at college when I was 18 years old.**

In this version it's clear that the speaker was 18 years old. By adding the subject, it's less likely that someone will misinterpret your meaning.

**Before waking up, the cat jumped on my bed.**

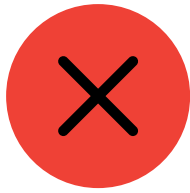
While the writer likely didn't mean that the cat jumped while asleep, because the subject is missing from the opening modifier it might be read that way.

**Before I woke up, the cat jumped on my bed.**

Once again, adding the subject to your modifying phrase can help to fix any dangling modifiers. By adding "I", we now know that the speaker was asleep, not the cat.

# Misplaced Modifiers

While a dangling modifier is missing a subject, a misplaced modifier is simply put too far away from the subject it describes. This makes it easy to misinterpret a sentence and put the descriptor with the wrong subject. Most often, the way to fix this is simply to move the modifier closer to the subject it describes. Let's take a look at some examples!



## **The chef saw a rat making pasta.**

Because of this sentence's misplaced modifier, it seems as though the rat was making the pasta, and while that is adorable, it's likely not what the writer meant. The modifier is too far away from "chef" for readers to connect the two easily.

## **While making pasta, the chef saw a rat.**

By moving the modifying phrase "making pasta" closer to the subject, "chef," the reader can easily tell that the chef is the one making pasta.

## **The sparkling dentist's tools lay on the table.**

In this sentence the modifying word is "sparkling," and because right now it is next to "dentist," it would seem as though the dentist is sparkly.

## **The dentist's sparkling tools lay on the table.**

Now that the modifier has been moved closer to its subject ("tools") the sentence is clearer, as we know that it is the tools that are sparkling instead of the dentist.

## **Bucky the bronco wore shoes for his hooves that were too small.**

Because the modifying phrase has been placed next to "hooves," a reader might think that Bucky's feet (not the shoes) are the things that are too small.

## **Bucky the bronco wore shoes that were too small for his hooves.**

By moving the modifier "too small" to the middle of the sentence next to "shoes," it is clear that the shoes are too small for Bucky.