Misplaced Modifier

In simple sentences, it is usually easy to understand what a modifier is modifying. However, when we begin adding more information into longer sentences, we must be careful that we make it clear which elements are modifying which parts of the sentence.

If we place a modifier too far away from the thing it describes, it can become a **misplaced modifier**.

**Misplaced modifiers**

A misplaced modifier can occur when we don’t place the modifier close enough to the word that it modifies, making its meaning unclear or incorrect. For example:

* “Burton was driving around the countryside while his friend sang songs **slowly**.”

Because of its (modifier’s) placement in the above sentence, we would presume that the adverb ***slowly*** is modifying ***sang***. If it is meant to modify ***driving***, the adverb should be placed directly before or after the verb it’s modifying to eliminate this confusion, as in:

* “Burton was **slowly** *driving* around the countryside while his friend sang songs.”

***or***

* “Burton was *driving* **slowly** around the countryside while his friend sang songs.”

Here’s another example:

* “The **rusted** woman’s bicycle made a horrible screeching noise.”

Now the sentence is completely incorrect, because, due to its position, ***rusted*** is modifying ***woman*** instead of ***bicycle***. The sentence should read:

* “The woman’s **rusted** *bicycle* made a horrible screeching noise.”

**With participle phrases**

These types of errors often occur with [**participle phrases**](http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Participle-Phrases.htm). Because they can appear in the beginning, middle, or end of a sentence, it is can be easy to misplace the noun or noun phrase they are modifying. For instance:

* “**Terrified after watching a scary movie**, my father had to comfort my little sister.”

In the above sentence, the participle phrase ***terrified after watching a scary movie*** is supposed to modify ***my little sister***. However, since ***my father*** appears closer to the participle phrase, it seems it is the father who is terrified.

The sentence should be rewritten to correct the misplaced modifier. For example:

* “My father had to comfort *my sister*, **terrified after watching a scary movie**.”

***or***

* “**Terrified after watching a scary movie**, *my sister* had to be comforted by my father.”

***or***

* “*My sister*, **terrified after watching a scary movie**, had to be comforted by my father.”

**Set-1 Correct the following sentences**

1. Running down the street, a car hit me.
2. Though beloved by its creator, most people found little use for the automatic egg spinner.
3. Installed on most computers, I find the web browser the most important piece of software.
4. Controlling most of the air space, bombs rained down from the Air Force onto the rebel bases.

**Set-2 Choose the correct answer based on the concept of modifier**

1. Used until the end of the Second World War, the German army employed the U-boat to attack both military or civilian watercraft.

A. the German army employed the U-boat to attack both military or

B. the U-boat was employed by the German army to attack both military and

C. the U-boat employed the German army to attack both military or

D. the German army had employed the U-Boat to attack both military and the

E. the U-boat has been employed by the German army to attack both military and also

1. The professor's consistent late arrival is offset somewhat by the remarkable quality of his lectures.

A. The professor's consistent late arrival

B. The professor's consistently late arrival

C. The consistent late arrival of the professor

D. Lately, the professor's arriving consistently

E. The professor's consistent late arriving

1. The hotel provided complimentary refreshments to the guests in expensive crystal glasses.

A. complimentary refreshments to the guests in expensive crystal glasses.

B. the guests with complimentary refreshments in expensive crystal glasses.

C. complimentarily provided to the guests refreshments in expensive crystal glasses.

D. complimentary refreshments to guests in expensive crystal glasses.

E. in crystal glasses the guests refreshments complimentarily.

1. Studies that have shown pets can help people with problems such as depression and anxiety.

A. Studies that have shown pets can help people with problems such as depression and anxiety.

B. Studies have shown that pets can help people with problems such as depression and anxiety.

C. Studies that have shown pets can help people with problems such as depression or anxiety.

D. Studies have shown pets that can help people with problems such as depression and anxiety.

E. Studies have shown pets can help people with problems such as depression and anxiety.