

Advanced and post Reading Material

ENGLISH FOR PROFESSIONAL PURPOSES II (BELH 1004]

SEMESTER IV

2023-24 TERM II

MODULE II: Modifiers

What are Modifiers?

Modifiers in English are linguistic tools that are used to add modification, precision, and depth to sentences.

- He caught the bus.
- He caught the **earliest** bus **into the city**.

Modifiers are typically adjectives (modifying nouns) or adverbs (modifying every other parts of speech except Noun or Pronoun). Modifiers include words, or group of words such as phrases, or clauses that enhance sentences by describing, clarifying, or limiting the meaning of another word, phrase, or clause.

A few examples of single words that may be used as modifiers are:

First, Green, Indoor, Travelling

Modifier phrases, which can be adverbial or adjectival phrases. Examples-

1. *near the bike*
2. *,a somewhat slow,*
3. *without care*

Sometimes, clauses act as modifiers. These, too, are generally either adverbial or adjectival. Examples

1. *when the sun sets,*
2. *who wore a white shirt*
3. *with excitement in their eyes*

Roles and Functions of Modifiers

Adjectives and Adverbs: These parts of speech serve as modifiers.

Example Adjectives:

He is **intelligent**.

I didn't enjoy the book because it was **extremely long**.

The coming thunderstorm looked **bad**.

Example Adverbs:

The annual day celebrations, **to be held next week**, got postponed.

1. She had an **ardent** craving for burgers and milkshakes.
2. They speak **quietly**.
3. I did **badly** on my accounting test because I didn't study.
4. Emelia felt that she had never done **so well** on a test.

Phrases as Modifiers:

Phrases (adjective, adverbial, or noun phrases) can also modify.

1. We visited Burj Khalifa, the tallest building in the world.
2. The Eiffel Tower, situated in Paris, is one of the wonders of the world.

Clauses as Modifiers:

Relative clauses provide additional information about a subject or object.

1. The book that I borrowed from the library was interesting.

Appositives as Modifiers:

Generally, two nouns do not occur together without a conjunction such as,

Hamid and Sanmay

Appositives are the nouns/noun phrases that are used with already used noun in a sentence that gives the reader supplemental information. In grammar, an element is said to be *placed in apposition* to another element if it provides an extra layer of description to it.

For instance,

1. Philips, **the CEO of the company**, knows how to deal with such people.

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2. Shahrukh Khan, **a Bollywood actor**, is one of the most celebrated actors in the world.
3. My childhood friend, **Anant**, loved horses.

Restricters as Modifiers

A **restrictor** is a one-word modifier that limits the meaning of another word or a group of words. Restricters include the words such as:

almost, only, merely, nearly, scarcely, simply, even, exactly, just, and hardly.

Usually, a restricter modifies the word or phrase that immediately follows it:

1. Only the Greener Side serves breakfast on Sundays.
2. The Greener Side serves only breakfast on Sundays.
3. The Greener Side serves breakfast only on Sundays.

A restricter placed at the end of a sentence modifies the word or phrase just before it:

4. The Greener Side serves breakfast on Sundays only.

If you place only carelessly, you will confuse your reader:

*The Greener Side only serves breakfast on Sundays.

Is breakfast the only meal it serves on Sundays, or is Sunday the only day on which it serves breakfast?

Modifiers are versatile and can appear at the beginning, middle, or end of a sentence. They enrich our language, making it more vivid and expressive.

Position of the modifiers:

When it comes to producing the right meaning of the sentence using modifiers, we need to be a little concerned about their position in the

sentence. The following is a chart that helps us learn it.

Nouns as modifiers

It is not only adjectives, but nouns can also modify nouns, at times. This means they can also function as a modifier. Look at the following tabular chart to understand the usage as well as the position of the words. Determiners come first in noun phrases, before adjectives and noun modifiers.

determiner(s)	adjective(s)	noun modifier(s)	head noun
<i>Her</i>	<i>little</i>		<i>sister</i>
<i>Every</i>		<i>college</i>	<i>student</i>
<i>Two</i>	<i>big, old</i>	<i>kitchen</i>	<i>tables</i>
<i>My three</i>	<i>best</i>		<i>friends</i>

Nouns as modifiers

It is not only adjectives, but nouns can also modify nouns, at times.

1. Computer software
2. A two-minute rest

Errors in use of Modifiers-

1-Misplaced

2- Dangling

If either of these errors occurs, readers become stumped trying to figure out *what* the writer meant to say. The good point here is that these errors can be easily overcome.

1- Misplaced Modifier:

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A misplaced modifier is a modifier that is placed too far from the word or words it modifies. Misplaced modifiers change the meaning of the sentence, make the sentence awkward and sometimes unintentionally humorous.

Incorrect: 1-She wore a bicycle helmet on her head *that was too large*.

Correct: She wore a bicycle helmet *that was too large* on her head.

Notice in the incorrect sentence it sounds as if her head was too large! Of course, the writer is referring to the helmet, not to the person's head. The corrected version of the sentence clarifies the writer's meaning.

Incorrect: 2-They bought a kitten for my brother *they call Shadow*.

Correct: They bought a kitten *they call Shadow* for my brother.

In the incorrect sentence, it seems that the brother's name is *Shadow*. That's because the modifier is too far from the word it modifies, which is *kitten*.

3- The research guide told me he needed someone who could type badly (modifier).

Is the research guide's need urgent, or does he need someone who struggles with typing?

Better: The supervisor told me he badly needed someone who could type.

4- The mouse was found by a farmer lying (modifier) in the field.

Who was lying in the field, the mouse, or the farmer?

Better: The mouse lying in the field was found by a farmer.

Or: A farmer found the mouse lying in the field.

2- Dangling Modifier

A dangling modifier is a word, phrase, or clause that describes something that has been left out of the sentence. When there is nothing that the

word, phrase, or clause can modify, the modifier is said to dangle. **The modifier must modify a word or phrase that is included in your sentence.**

Incorrect: 1- *Riding in the sports car*, the world whizzed by rapidly.

Correct: As Daniel was *riding in the sports car*, the world whizzed by rapidly.

In the incorrect sentence, *riding in the sports car* is dangling. The reader is left wondering who is riding in the sports car. The writer must tell the reader!

Incorrect: 2- *Walking home at night*, the trees looked like spooky aliens.

Correct: As Sarah was *walking home at night*, the trees looked like spooky aliens.

Correct: The trees looked like spooky aliens as Sarah was *walking home at night*. In the incorrect sentence *walking home at night* is dangling. Who is walking home at night? Sarah. Note that there are two different ways the dangling modifier can be corrected.

Incorrect: 3-To win the spelling bee, Ankita and Dev should join our team.

Correct: If we want to win the spelling bee this year, Ankita and Dev should join our team.

In the incorrect sentence, *to win the spelling bee* is dangling. Who wants to win the spelling bee?

Incorrect: 4- The patient was referred to the physician with stomach pain.

Correct: The patient with stomach pain was referred to the physician.

Is it the physician who has stomach pain or the patient?

Tips

The following three steps will help you quickly spot a dangling modifier:

1- Look for an *-ing* modifier at the beginning of your sentence or another modifying phrase:

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1- *Painting for three hours at night*, the kitchen was finally finished by Maggie. (*Painting* is the *-ing* modifier.)

Underline the first noun that follows it:

Painting for three hours at night, the kitchen was finally finished by Maggie.

1. Make sure the modifier and noun go together logically. If they do not, it is very likely you have a dangling modifier.

After identifying the dangling modifier, rewrite the sentence.

Painting for three hours at night, Maggie finally finished the kitchen.