# SEMESTER IV [APRM] TERM III

**MODULE 3: MODIFIERS**

A Modifier is a word, phrase or a clause that provides additional information about another word or a group of words. A modifier can also appear as an adjunct. In other words, a modifier makes the meaning of a word, phrase or a clause more specific.

## Types of Modifier

* **Modifier Word**

1. An **expensive** (adjective) motorcycle
2. The rock fell **suddenly** (adverb).

## Modifier Phrase

1. I saw a **very fast** car. (adjective phrase)
2. She sat **on the roof**. (adverbial phrase)

## Modifier Clause

1. The thief **that stole the money** was caught by the policeman (adjective clause)
2. He ran **when the jaguar appeared**. (adverbial clause)
   1. Modifiers in English include Adjectives and Determiners: Possessive determiner (i.e. **My** house, **Your** car), Demonstrative determiner (i.e. this, those), Article (i.e. a, an, the), Quantifiers (i.e. many, some, two).

It also includes adjectival phrases that can be any group of words headed by an adjective (i.e. **an extremely huge** building) or another form of a multi-word adverb such as a Prepositional phrase (i.e. She was standing **in the corner**).

* 1. Modifiers also function as an Adverb. Sometimes as a single-word adverb (i.e. Ram plays **nicely,** You should think **carefully**) and sometimes as an adverbial phrase (i.e. You should have thought **very carefully**, He always plays **in the corner** of the playground)

The most common types of adverbial phrases are:

* **Prepositional Phrases** (i.e. He should stand in the front)
* **An adverb with an intensifier** (i.e. Students should listen to the teacher **very carefully**)

Under the Adverbial clause, we note that it includes a subject and a verb. It always functions as a dependent clause and starts with a subordinating conjunction (i.e. because, if, until, when, like, etc.)

Based on the position of the modifiers, we can categorise modifiers into two types:

1. **Premodifiers:** The modifiers that appear before the head are called premodifiers. Most commonly the adjectives are usually placed before the nouns. Adverbs too are often placed before the words they modify.

## Examples

1. Generally (adverb) the (article) brown (descriptive adjective) dogs are nice.
2. Give me that (demonstrative) black (descriptive adjective) covered (past participle) shining (present participle) box.

## (In the above example the noun ‘box’ has four pre-modifiers)

1. **Postmodifiers:** The modifiers that appear after the head word are called postmodifiers. Most commonly, the adverbs come after the verbs and modify them. However, there are some adjectives which also occur after the nouns and modify them. Adverbs of time, Adverb of manner, Adverbs of place/direction usually come after the verbs they modify. Appositives, Prepositional Phrases (adjectives/adverbs), Infinitives (adverbs

/adjectives), Dependent clause, etc. usually come after the nouns they modify.

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## Examples

1. Mr Narendra Modi, **the prime minister of India,** (appositive) has been doing ‘*Man ki baat’* **since 2014**. (adverb of time).
2. Dr Sharma, **our teacher**,(appositive) gives us tasks **to do** (infinitive-adjective) **in the class** (adverb of place).

## Points to remember while using the Modifiers:-

1. **a. Misplaced Modifier**

A modifier is best placed alongside what is being modified. If in case, the modifier is placed too far away, it could lead to an ambiguous interpretation.

## Examples

1. Amit heard her when she whispered **clearly.**

(Incorrect)

Amit heard her **clearly** when she whispered. (Correct)

1. Rohan piled all of his clothes in the hamper **that he had won**. (Incorrect)

Rohan piled all of his **clothes that he had won** in the hamper. (Correct)

**b. Dangling Modifier**

A modifier is understood as dangling, when it has nothing to modify.

## Examples

1. Having **read** the book, the film will be a hit. (Incorrect)

Having **read** the book, **I** think the film will be a hit. (Correct)

1. **Having been fixed the night before**, Raj could use the car. (Incorrect)

**Since the car had been fixed the night before**, Raj could use it. (Correct)

1. If your multi-word adverb (phrase/clause) is placed initially in the sentence, a comma is necessary.

* If you want your son to be like Mukesh Ambani, work like Dhirubhai Ambani.

(The sentence starts with an adverbial clause. As it is at in the beginning of the sentence, it is followed by a comma. The comma shows where the adverbial clause ends and the main clause starts.)

But if the position of the adverbial clause is changed, we don’t require a comma. e.g.

* Work like Dhirubhai Ambani if you want your son to be like Mukesh Ambani.