

THE BEST ACT PREP COURSE EVER

MODIFIERS

ACT English: Problem Set

Correct the modifier error(s) in the following sentences.

1. Heading for safety, the German soldiers' guns continued to fire at the triumphant Russians.
2. Coming up the path, an enormous tree blocked the path of the race's leader.
3. Having been recognized for numerous contributions to today's society, the experiments were measured and recorded by Nikola Tesla himself.
4. Hoping to come close to the success of his predecessors, Mark's plan was launched at the start of his reign.
5. While continuing forward with his exploration, the samples were carefully organized and put away for safekeeping.
6. Aiming for a peaceful coalition, a union was formed between each of the major countries in the European continent.
7. As she progressed and advanced her skills, numerous awards and titles were won by the world champion tennis player, Serena Williams.
8. Hitting directly after the deadly and sudden earthquake, houses, people, and cars were swept away by an enormous tsunami.
9. When they took the time to read over the material twice, the students' history test scores rose significantly.
10. Although she had never tried baking before, the cake that Penny made actually tasted very delicious.

Choose the correct answer from the following options.

1. Stress overcame her. While planning for the ceremony, every possible embarrassing scenario that could happen was in her thoughts.
 - A. NO CHANGE
 - B. she thought of every possible embarrassing scenario that could happen.
 - C. her thoughts were full of possible embarrassing scenarios.
 - D. she thinks out every possible embarrassing scenario.
2. The best placement for the underlined portion would be: Banana, papaya, and mango trees are scattered easy-growing throughout the tropical farmland.
 - A. where it is now
 - B. before the word “banana” (adjusting capitalization as needed)
 - C. after the word “trees”
 - D. after the word “farmland”
3. Keeping the ducklings in check, they waddled across the road in a group guided by the mother duck.
 - A. NO CHANGE
 - B. the mother duck guided them across the road.
 - C. the group waddled across the road.
 - D. the largest duck, being the mother, guides them across the road.
4. Using its website, advertising, and social networking, applications for the internship were gathered by the pharmaceutical company.
 - A. NO CHANGE
 - B. the internship applications were gathered by the pharmaceutical company.
 - C. gathering of internship applications was done by the pharmaceutical company.
 - D. the pharmaceutical company gathered internship applications.
5. Considered to be very intelligent and clever, tools are used by crows to carry out their daily activities.
 - A. NO CHANGE
 - B. crows using tools to carry out
 - C. tools that crows use help them carry out
 - D. crows will use tools to carry out
6. The best placement for the underlined portion would be: For his 10-page paper, David had to compare and contrast the NBA (National Basketball Association) and the WNBA (Women’s National Basketball Association).
 - A. where it is now
 - B. after the word “contrast”
 - C. after the word “David”
 - D. after the words “NBA (National Basketball Association)”
7. At night markets, selling a variety of foods and drinks ranging from gelato to hot dogs are vendors.
 - A. NO CHANGE
 - B. street vendors, ranging from gelato to hot dogs, sell a variety of foods and drinks.
 - C. ranging from gelato to hot dogs, street vendors sell a variety of foods and drinks.
 - D. street vendors sell a variety of foods and drinks ranging from gelato to hot dogs.
8. The best placement for the underlined portion would be: Nikola Tesla, a college dropout, patented the Tesla coil that has a pulsing, high-voltage alternating current in 1891 so that electricity could be transferred without wires.
 - A. where it is now
 - B. after the word “dropout” (and before the comma)
 - C. after the word “coil”
 - D. after the word “wires”
9. The coral reef, is often called the rainforest of the sea, home to over hundreds of thousands of species because of its diverse ecosystem.

The underlined portion would most logically be placed:

 - A. where it is now
 - B. after the word “reef” but before the comma that follows “reef”
 - C. after the word “ecosystem”
 - D. after the word “rainforest”
10. Walking home from work one scorching summer day, my decision to learn how to skateboard was made.
 - A. NO CHANGE
 - B. I decided to learn how to skateboard one scorching summer day, walking home from work.
 - C. Walking home from work one scorching summer day was the beginning of my skateboarding.
 - D. The start of my skateboarding came to me as I was walking home from work one scorching summer day.

11. The best placement for the underlined portion would be:

The fence around the White House is 8 feet tall tightly guarded and surrounds the perimeters of the White House as well as the gardens and walkways..

- A. where it is now
- B. after the word “fence”
- C. after the word “walkways”
- D. after the words “surrounds the”

12. Shortly after her first performance at Walt Disney Concert Hall with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Angela, at sixteen, performed at Carnegie Hall.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. audiences watched Angela, who was sixteen,
- C. Angela at sixteen performed,
- D. audiences watched sixteen-year-old Angela perform

13. Which placement for the underlined portion makes the most grammatical sense?

Additionally, she wrote about how her first year of college was to her friends and how all her classes were challenging, yet interesting.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. after the word “Additionally,”
- C. after the word “wrote”
- D. after the word “interesting” (but before the period)

14. Hoping to be the first, Apollo 11’s success to and from the moon was a significant milestone for the United States.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. Marking the end of the moon race with the Soviet Union,
- C. Competing with the Soviet Union,
- D. Presented with the Presidential Medal of Freedom,

15. A successful movie to make a sequel for, the director envisioned situating the characters in even trickier circumstances, all while maintaining the original movie’s humorous tone.

- A. NO CHANGE
- B. Building on the success of the first movie,
- C. On which to make a successful movie,
- D. Gaining success from the release of the first movie,

ANSWER KEY

1. Heading for safety, the German soldiers' guns continued to fire at the triumphant Russians.
The soldiers' guns did not head for safety; rather, it was the German soldiers who did so. Whoever or whatever is doing the "-ing" action must come after the comma:
Heading for safety, the German soldiers continued to fire their guns at the triumphant Russians.
2. Coming up the path, an enormous tree blocked the path of the race's leader.
The tree did not come up the path; it was the race leader that came up the path.
Coming up the path, the race leader went around the enormous tree that blocked the path.
3. Having been recognized for numerous contributions to today's society, the experiments were measured and recorded by Nikola Tesla himself.
The experiments themselves have not been recognized; Tesla was the one recognized in society.
Having been recognized for numerous contributions to today's society, Nikola Tesla measured and recorded the experiments himself.
4. Hoping to come close to the success of his predecessors, Mark's plan was launched at the start of his reign.
Mark's plan can't hope to come close to the success of his predecessors; rather, it is Mark who hopes to do so.
Hoping to come close to the success of his predecessors, Mark launched his plan at the start of his reign.
5. While continuing forward with his exploration, the samples were carefully organized and put away for safekeeping.
The samples did not continue forward with "his" exploration, so the sentence must be rewritten to modify the proper subject.
While continuing forward with his exploration, he carefully organized the samples and put them away for safekeeping.
6. Aiming for a peaceful coalition, a union was formed between each of the major countries in the European continent.
The modifier incorrectly modifies the union; the countries were the ones aiming for a peaceful coalition.
Aiming for a peaceful coalition, each of the major countries in the European continent formed a union between them.
7. As she progressed and advanced her skills, numerous awards and titles were won by the world champion tennis player, Serena Williams.
The modifier incorrectly modifies the numerous awards and titles; Williams was the one who progressed and advanced her skills.
As she progressed and advanced her skills, world champion tennis player Serena Williams won numerous awards and titles.
8. Hitting directly after the deadly and sudden earthquake, houses, people, and cars were swept away by an enormous tsunami.
The houses, people, and cars did not hit after the earthquake; rather, it was the tsunami that hit directly.
Hitting directly after the deadly and sudden earthquake, the tsunami swept away houses, people, and cars.
9. When they took the time to read over the material twice, the students' history test scores rose significantly.
The test scores did take the time to read the material twice; rather, it was the students who performed the action, so the sentence must be rewritten to reflect this.
When they took the time to read over the material twice, the students saw their history test scores rise significantly.
10. Although she had never tried baking before, the cake that Penny made actually tasted very delicious.
The modifier incorrectly modifies the cake; Penny was the one who had never tried baking before.
Although she had never tried baking before, Penny made a cake that actually tasted very delicious.

ANSWER KEY

1. B 2. B 3. B 4. D 5. D 6. A 7. D 8. C 9. B 10. B 11. D 12. A
13. C 14. B 15. B

ANSWER EXPLANATIONS

1. B The modifier incorrectly modifies the embarrassing scenarios; “she” was the one that thought of them while planning the ceremony. (D) is incorrectly in the present tense.
2. B The modifier should come before the fruits it describes (banana, papaya, and mango) at the beginning of the sentence.
3. B The modifier incorrectly modifies “they”; the mother duck was keeping the ducklings in check.
4. D The modifier incorrectly modifies the internship applications; it was the pharmaceutical company that used their website, advertisements, and social networks.
5. D Tools are not considered to be intelligent and clever; rather, crows are perceived as such so must come after the comma. (B) places crows in the proper position, but is a fragment.
6. A The sentence contains a modifier that appropriately modifies the subject David.
7. D The act of selling food and drink cannot be at the night markets; the vendors were selling them. Likewise, choice (B) makes it sound as if “gelato” were a street vendor-- vendors are people.
8. C The modifier must be next to the patent it describes because it gives necessary information about when it was patented.
9. B The modifier incorrectly modifies the sea; the coral reef is home to an abundance of species. Furthermore, a single comma inappropriately separates the subject and verb in this sentence. Only a pair of commas may intercept a subject and verb.
10. B The modifier incorrectly modifies the decision; I was the one who decided to learn how to skateboard. Choice (D) is awkward (a “start” doesn’t “come to you” -- maybe an idea does, but not a beginning).
11. D The modifier incorrectly modifies the fence’s height. It should be placed before “perimeters” because it describes the security in that area. Additionally, the lack of pertinent commas in the initial sentence is a clue that moving the phrase is best.
12. A The modifier is used appropriately in this sentence. “Her” in the introduction must be followed by “Angela” after the comma for the sentence to be clear. Choice (C) incorrectly uses a comma between performed and “at Carnegie Hall” -- while the prepositional phrase “at sixteen” is non essential, the sentence is awkward without the idea that she performs “at Carnegie Hall” -- as a result the comma in front of the prepositional phrase “at Carnegie Hall” is inappropriate.
13. C The modifier must come after “she wrote” because it describes whom she wrote to. In other positions it sounds awkward-- as if she were relating how her friends were judging her first year rather than as if she were writing them about her own experience.
14. B (A) is awkward-- the first what? It is unclear what “first” is denoting. The correct answer changes the modifier to one that fits best with the rest of the sentence about the Apollo 11’s success. (C) is incorrect because the concept of “success” is not competing with the country of the Soviet Union. (D) is incorrect because a “success” does not win medals of freedom-- teams and people do.
15. B (A) is incorrect: the modifier incorrectly modifies the director (the director is not a movie). The correct answer changes the modifier to one that fits best with the rest of the sentence about the first movie’s success. (D) may seem tempting, but in context “building on” is more forward thinking toward a sequel and works better with the ideas that follow.