

IDENTIFYING & REVISING DANGLING MODIFIERS

Modifiers describe something or qualify a statement. They usually come at the beginning of a sentence but can also occur elsewhere.

Dangling modifiers are modifiers that do not properly connect the rest of the sentence because its subject is missing.

Removing and revising your dangling modifiers can help make your writing clearer and more active!

IDENTIFYING DANGLING MODIFIERS

When trying to find dangling modifiers, check that your *modifiers* clearly connect to the *subjects* they describe or qualify. In each of the examples below, the modifier at the beginning of the sentence does not seem to correspond properly with the subjects directly after them, causing the meanings of these sentences to be unclear. Let's review each sentence:

1. *Walking across campus*, the university's architecture was admired.
 - At first, it sounds as if the university's architecture was walking around campus. The actual character walking around the campus is missing.
2. *Checking the cell cultures*, they were determined to be contaminated.
 - There are numerous possible readings of this sentence because the subject is unclear. Are the cell cultures examining themselves? Were the people who examined the cell cultures determined to be contaminated? Neither of these interpretations makes much sense.
3. *After being fully cooked*, Caleb took the peppers and mushrooms off the grill.
 - This example has a major flaw that results in a drastically different meaning than the author likely intended. Since the subject that comes after the modifier is "Caleb," it sounds as if Caleb was "fully cooked" rather than the food!

REVISING DANGLING MODIFIERS

Now that you can identify dangling modifiers, you can begin to revise them. To revise a dangling modifier, you need to rewrite the sentence so that the *subject* that the modifier describes or qualifies is placed directly after the *modifier*.

1. *Walking across campus*, the new professor admired the university's architecture.
2. *Checking the cell cultures*, the students determined that the cultures were contaminated.
3. *After Caleb fully cooked them*, the peppers and mushrooms were taken off the grill.

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