

Correcting Misplaced Modifiers

If a modifier appears in the wrong place in a sentence, the meaning of the sentence may be confusing. A modifier that is incorrectly placed is called a misplaced modifier. In most cases a modifier should be near the word or phrase it modifies.

Example 1: Charles saw a dog on the way to the library.

This sentence seems to say that the dog was going to the library. It's unlikely that a dog would go to the library. It really means Charles was going to the library. The sentence should be rewritten as:

On the way to the library, Charles saw a dog.

It would be even more confusing if there were two humans in the sentence.

Example 2: Charles saw Ava on the way to the library.

This sentence says that Ava was going to the library, which is possible. If it was Charles who was going to the library, the sentence would be clearer this way:

On the way to the library, Charles saw Ava.

Correct the misplaced modifiers in the following sentences.

1. They gave a cat to my sister named Fluffy.

2. The student was punished by the teacher who cheated on the test.

3. Chased by a lion, the photographers saw a terrified gazelle.

4. The pilot wore a uniform to fly the plane that was covered in gold buttons.

5. Three homes were reported burned by the fire department in July.

Correcting Misplaced Modifiers

If a modifier appears in the wrong place in a sentence, the meaning of the sentence may be confusing. A modifier that is incorrectly placed is called a misplaced modifier. In most cases a modifier should be near the word or phrase it modifies.

Example 1: Charles saw a dog on the way to the library.

This sentence seems to say that the dog was going to the library. It's unlikely that a dog would go to the library. It really means Charles was going to the library. The sentence should be rewritten as:

On the way to the library, Charles saw a dog.

It would be even more confusing if there were two humans in the sentence.

Example 2: Charles saw Ava on the way to the library.

This sentence says that Ava was going to the library, which is possible. If it was Charles who was going to the library, the sentence would be clearer this way:

On the way to the library, Charles saw Ava.

Correct the misplaced modifiers in the following sentences.

Answers: Student's answers may vary. Example of correct answers:

1. They gave a cat to my sister named Fluffy.

They gave a cat named Fluffy to my sister.

2. The student was punished by the teacher who cheated on the test.

The student who cheated on the test was punished by the teacher.

3. Chased by a lion, the photographers saw a terrified gazelle.

The photographers saw a terrified gazelle chased by a lion.

4. The pilot wore a uniform to fly the plane that was covered in gold buttons.

To fly the plane, the pilot wore a uniform that was covered in gold buttons.

5. Three homes were reported burned by the fire department in July.

The fire department reported three homes burned in July.
