



Dangling and Misplaced Modifiers

Dangling modifiers:

Dangling modifiers refer to modification that fails to refer logically to any word in the sentence. Often dangling modifiers are included in introductory word groups that suggest but do not name an actor. The clause following introductory modification should name the actor; if it does not, this creates a dangling modifier.

Example: *When falling into the pool, it was embarrassing.*

The introductory modifier “when falling into the pool” has no actor. This makes it a dangling modifier, even if it may be understood that the actor is implied you or I.

Revised: *When I fell into the pool, it was embarrassing.*

This revision includes the actor into the introductory modifier to get rid of the dangling modifier.

Another way to revised dangling modifier is to change the subject of sentence to include the actor.

Example: *When falling into the pool, it was embarrassing.*

Revised: *When falling into the pool, it was embarrassing for me.*

This sentence could still be expressed better. It may be best to completely revise.

Better: *Falling into the pool was embarrassing for me.*

Making the introductory modification into a gerund makes the sentence flow more smoothly.

Misplaced modifiers:

Misplaced modifiers refer to modification that is unclear in its object.

Example: *The man returned to the store where he brought a television yesterday in his brand-new car.*

This sentence seems to imply that the man bought a television yesterday while in his car. Moving the modification can make this sentence clearer.

Revised: *In his brand-new car, the man returned to the store where he bought a television yesterday.*