

Modifiers: Dangling, Misplaced, Ambiguous

A. Most of the underlined modifiers in the following sentences are misplaced, distorting the intended meaning of the sentences. Label the sentences with **misplaced modifiers** (MM). Label the sentences with correctly placed modifiers (C).

- _____ 1. They watched the goldfish eating sandwiches.
- _____ 2. They planted the seeds in their blue jeans.
- _____ 3. The cheerleader tripped and fell on her skirt.
- _____ 4. The Boy Scouts went camping with their fathers.
- _____ 5. She kicked him in the arena.
- _____ 6. I sent them a picture blown up in an envelope.
- _____ 7. She asked the teller for money with a smile.
- _____ 8. Santa's smiling face appeared with a huge sack of presents for everyone.
- _____ 9. She found a spider doing exercises on the floor.
- _____ 10. The little girls watched the ballerina doing pirouettes.
-

B. Most of the underlined modifiers in the following sentences could refer to more than one element in the sentence, making the sentence **ambiguous**. Label the ambiguous sentences (A) and the unambiguous ones (C).

- _____ 1. Because of inflation, she asked yearly to have her salary reviewed.
- _____ 2. The father reminded his children carefully to walk home.
- _____ 3. The conversation disturbed him very much.
- _____ 4. She told them nicely to eat their dinner.
- _____ 5. The teacher told the students regularly to go to the Writing Lab.
- _____ 6. They did whatever they could in the primaries to get their candidates elected.
- _____ 7. The guests stood around awkwardly waiting to be asked to sit down.
- _____ 8. They carefully picked the anchovies off their pizza.

- _____ 9. I usually order clothes from catalogs which I like.
- _____ 10. His piano teacher asked him strictly to count the beats.
-

C. Most of the underlined modifiers in the following sentences are dangling; they do not really modify anything in the sentence. Label the sentences with **dangling modifiers** (DM) and the other sentences (C).

- _____ 1. By using brainwashing techniques, the captives will begin to sympathize with their captors.
- _____ 2. Chugging his beer, the party continued noisily.
- _____ 3. Working at the polling place, election day dragged on.
- _____ 4. Raising their arms triumphantly, the dancers completed the finale.
- _____ 5. As communications chairperson, several projects have been completed or begun.
- _____ 6. Roughing the kicker, a penalty was called.
- _____ 7. One year after becoming supervisor, the store closed.
- _____ 8. Wrestling with my conscience, the problem was solved.
- _____ 9. Ten minutes after she was married, the bride began to cry.
- _____ 10. After wishing him a happy birthday, the phone went dead.
-

D. Most of the underlined **split infinitives** in the following sentences are awkward. Label sentences with them (SI) and the other sentences (C).

- _____ 1. If you want to sometime buy any Avon products, contact my friend Anne.
- _____ 2. Kathy wants to by getting an M.B.A. degree change careers.
- _____ 3. The plumber said he would be back to without delay fix the leaking pipes.
- _____ 4. She wanted to at least four times practice her speech before giving it in front of the class.
- _____ 5. The moderator asked the panelists to please be seated.
- _____ 6. The astronauts decided to as long as they could maintain contact with ground control proceed with their exploration.
- _____ 7. I need to several times a week wash my hair.
-

- _____ 8. The firemen attempted to with chemicals arrest the spreading fire.
- _____ 9. When I heard the birds chirping, I knew that spring was about to after a long, dreary winter come.
- _____ 10. If you want to without getting any references hire him, that's your business.
-

E. The following sentences all contain **misplaced**, **ambiguous**, or **dangling modifiers**, or **split infinitives**. Identify (**MM**, **A**, **DM**, **SI**).

- _____ 1. Sounding just like a human voice, she played the cello.
- _____ 2. The teacher instructed the students by the desk.
- _____ 3. Mouthing the words sloppily, it was clear she wasn't doing her own singing.
- _____ 4. His supervisor asked him after work to do a regression analysis.
- _____ 5. The old man was excited because he was going to for the first time in his life fly in an airplane.
- _____ 6. They ate the hamburgers on the barstools.
- _____ 7. He asked his wife weekly to go to Hawaii.
- _____ 8. They drove the car into the garage full of gas.
- _____ 9. Lifting the heavy chair, a vein stood out in his neck.
- _____ 10. I left the elephants laughing hysterically.
-

F. The following sentences all contain **misplaced**, **ambiguous**, or **dangling modifiers**, or **split infinitives**. Identify (**MM**, **A**, **DM**, **SI**).

- _____ 1. Dripping with syrup, they passed me the waffles.
- _____ 2. I want to never practice the violin again.
- _____ 3. It's hard to wind a clock with sticky hands.
- _____ 4. Having gotten up at 6:00 a.m., it was best to get to bed by 9:00 p.m.
- _____ 5. Being a genius, classes seemed dull.
- _____ 6. He realized in March that he was going to be laid off.

- _____ 7. Colorful plastic dishes are going to be monthly featured in the catalog.
- _____ 8. The coach told the players over and over again to use the fast break.
- _____ 9. Finding her mother busy, the day was boring.
- _____ 10. After clipping his wings, the parrot remained in his cage.
-

G. The following sentences all contain **misplaced**, **ambiguous**, or **dangling modifiers**, or **split infinitives**. Identify (**MM**, **A**, **DM**, **SI**).

- _____ 1. She kept asking him tenderly to kiss her.
- _____ 2. At the age of six, my grandmother died.
- _____ 3. Hissing and slithering, I was attacked by the snake.
- _____ 4. After taking off his shirt, the doctor gave the boy a shot.
- _____ 5. Having discovered a hair in the soup, they didn't want to under any circumstances ever again eat in that restaurant.
- _____ 6. Watching television, the asparagus was overcooked.
- _____ 7. The young couple wanted secretly to get married.
- _____ 8. Her house still a mess, the hostess was not ready to graciously and warmly welcome her guests when they arrived.
- _____ 9. Having graduated from high school, my first year was spent working in a toothbrush factory.
- _____ 10. Opening his mouth, the dentist proceeded to drill.
-

H. The following sentences all contain **misplaced**, **ambiguous**, or **dangling modifiers**, or **split infinitives**. Identify (**MM**, **A**, **DM**, **SI**).

- _____ 1. They hung the painting from the ladder.
- _____ 2. My family is proud of me since making the decision to move to Florida.
- _____ 3. They listened with their hands in the air.
- _____ 4. After a dismal first half, the coach tried to with a rousing pep talk rally the sagging spirits of his players.
- _____ 5. The students bought a lunch in a run-down restaurant which cost very little.
-

- _____ 6. The director asked the actors three times to repeat the scene.
- _____ 7. Since deciding to go back to school, my days are complicated.
- _____ 8. Eating my french fries, the weatherman predicted sunshine for tomorrow.
- _____ 9. The exchange students we met for coffee occasionally questioned us about our latest slang.
- _____ 10. After using the dictionary, all the words were spelled correctly.
-

I. The following sentences all contain **misplaced**, **ambiguous**, or **dangling modifiers**, or **split infinitives**. Identify (MM, A, DM, SI).

- _____ 1. She asked me in a pleasant voice to read.
- _____ 2. I found a dollar walking home.
- _____ 3. After leaving the zoo, the animals were fed.
- _____ 4. Adam and Eve were disturbed to realize they were to be without any resources thrust from the Garden of Eden.
- _____ 5. He answered the telephone resting in the tub.
- _____ 6. I knew in a minute that I would be chosen.
- _____ 7. Here are some suggestions for handling obscene phone calls from noted psychologists.
- _____ 8. I read that a well-known actress had made a spectacle of herself in the morning paper.
- _____ 9. She prepared the eggs which he ate in the frying pan.
- _____ 10. Pleading a headache, she turned down a date with a man who smoked cigars named Felix Unger.