

ADJECTIVE CLAUSES
APPOSITIVES
&
DANGLING OR
MISPLACED
MODIFIERS


CHAPTER 3: SECTIONS 2 AND 3

MODIFYING WITH ADJECTIVE CLAUSES


Things to Know

- ❖ **Adjectives** modify nouns and pronouns
- ❖ A **clause** is a group of words that contains both a subject and a verb
- ❖ A clause can **function** as an **adjective** modifier
- ❖ An **adjective clause** modifies nouns and pronouns
- ❖ Adjective clauses begin with a **relative pronoun** (who, whom, whose, which, that, and sometimes when or where)
- ❖ Adjective clauses **follow the noun or pronoun** they modify


SOME EXAMPLES



My neighbor **who is insensitive** plays his trombone all night long.



We returned the money to the person **who had lost it**.



Sidney decided to move to Colorado, **where his family used to spend summer vacations**.

DECISIONS, DECISIONS!

SINGLE WORD ADJECTIVE

My **insensitive** neighbor

ADJECTIVE CLAUSE

My neighbor, **who is insensitive**

Sometimes it's nice to have options...



A WORD ON PUNCTUATION

DON'T USE A COMMA

IF THE ADJECTIVE
CLAUSE PROVIDES
NECESSARY
INFORMATION

DO USE A COMMA

IF THE ADJECTIVE
CLAUSE PROVIDES
INFORMATION
THAT IS **MERELY**
DESCRIPTIVE

FOR EXAMPLE

DON'T USE A COMMA

The man **who was sitting next to my uncle** at the banquet is a famous actor.

THE ADJECTIVE CLAUSE DISTINGUISHES THE MAN NEXT TO THE UNCLE FROM ALL THE OTHER MEN AT THE BANQUET.

USE A COMMA

Tom Hanks, **who is a famous actor**, sat next to my uncle at the banquet.

THE ADJECTIVE CLAUSE IS NOT NECESSARY SINCE MOST PEOPLE KNOW WHO TOM HANKS IS.



MODIFYING WITH APPOSITIVES

Things to Know

- ❖ An appositive is a noun or pronoun, along with any modifiers, that **RENAMES** another noun or pronoun.
- ❖ An appositive almost always **follows** the word it renames.
- ❖ An appositive is usually **set off with commas**.

SOME EXAMPLES

My neighbor, **an insensitive man**, plays his trombone all night long.

We returned the money, **an enormous amount**, to the person who had lost it.

Sidney decided to move to Colorado, **a beautiful vacation spot**, after his honeymoon.

DO YOU SEE THE DIFFERENCE?

ADJECTIVE CLAUSE

My neighbor, **who is an insensitive man**, plays the trombone all night long.

APPOSITIVE

My neighbor, **an insensitive man**, plays the trombone all night long.

SINGLE-WORD ADJECTIVE

My **insensitive** neighbor plays the trombone all night long.



MISPLACED MODIFIERS

Things to Know

- ❖ A modifier is nearly always placed just before or just after the word it modifies.
- ❖ A “misplaced” modifier is one that is placed somewhere in a sentence that doesn’t clearly indicate what it’s modifying.
- ❖ Misplaced modifiers can be single words.
- ❖ Misplaced modifiers can be phrases.
- ❖ Misplaced modifiers can be clauses.

EXAMPLE OF SINGLE-WORD MISPLACED MODIFIER



Albert **said quietly** to move
away from the snake.



Albert said to **move quietly**
away from the snake.

In the first sentence,
Albert's **voice** is quiet.

In the second sentence,
he is directing people to
move quietly so as not to
disturb the snake.

The second sentence
obviously conveys the
intended meaning.

Same modifier

(quietly)

Different meaning.

Misplaced phrases and clauses
can create rather confusing
and sometimes humorous
mistakes in writing.

I'm
confused...



EXAMPLE OF MISPLACED PHRASES AND CLAUSES

CORRECT

The driver **in the blue sports car** struck an innocent pedestrian.

The dog **chasing the car** barked at the bewildered driver.

They gave the bicycle **donated by the shop** to the child.

Lucia gave the money **that she had borrowed from her sister** to the homeless woman.

MISPLACED

The driver struck an innocent pedestrian **in the blue sports car**.

The dog barked at the bewildered driver **chasing the car**.

They gave the bicycle to the child **donated by the shop**.

Lucia gave the money to the homeless woman **that she had borrowed from her sister**.

An introductory phrase that
lacks a word to modify is called

A dangling
modifier

DANGLING MODIFIERS

Things to Know

- The most common dangling modifier errors are **verbals** (participial and infinitive phrases).
- Since these modifiers usually represent some sort of action (“verbal”), they need a **DOER** or **AGENT** of the action represented.

Example of a Dangling Modifier

Driving madly down the
boulevard, the horse just missed
being hit and killed.

Does this sentence make sense?

Wait a minute...

Who's driving
the car,
anyway?



Caution! Madly
driving horse!!!

The participial phrase
(driving madly down
the boulevard)
appears to be
modifying the word
horse.



But that's not possible...
is it??

How do we correct
this sentence so the
modifier doesn't

dangle?

Give it a word to modify (that makes sense)...

Driving madly down the boulevard,
the little old lady just missed hitting
and killing a poor little horse.




Stupid
horse.

MORE EXAMPLES OF DANGLING MODIFIERS



Nearly exhausted, the **game** was almost over.



After studying all night, the **test** wasn't so difficult after all.



To impress his new girlfriend, Dominic's **Chevrolet** was polished.

Can you correct these dangling modifiers?





Nearly exhausted, the players were relieved that the game was almost over.



After studying all night, I was happy to discover that the test wasn't so difficult after all.



To impress his new girlfriend, Dominic spent all day polishing his new Chevrolet.

Better

**LET'S
PRACTICE...
SHALL WE?**

Created by Elaine Minamide

Source: *Inside Writing: A Writer's Notebook* (8th edition), by William Salomone, Stephen McDonald, Martin Japtok