

Correcting Dangling Modifiers

Sometimes in a sentence it is difficult to tell what a modifying word or phrase is describing. That modifying word or phrase is called a dangling modifier.

Example: Working hard all afternoon in the kitchen, the cake I baked tasted terrible.

Working hard all afternoon in the kitchen is a modifying phrase. It is difficult, however, to understand who or what worked hard: *the cake* or *I*. Obviously the cake can't work hard, so the phrase must be modifying *I*. This confusion is the basis of a dangling modifier.

Correcting a dangling modifier often requires more than just moving words around. Usually the correction requires adding a word or phrase or rewording the sentence.

I worked hard all afternoon in the kitchen, and the cake I baked tasted terrible.

OR

Even after working hard all afternoon in the kitchen, I baked a terrible tasting cake.

Rewrite each of the following sentences correcting the dangling modifier.

1. After centuries of lying on the ocean floor, the treasure hunters found the Spanish galleon.

2. Watching carefully for hours, the flock of butterflies never arrived.

3. Thirsty, the glass of water was swallowed in one gulp.

4. Driving down the street, the park came into view.

5. Resolving to study more, the textbooks seemed more interesting.
