



# Dangling Modifiers

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*(The Word Witch)*

**A dangling modifier** is a word, phrase OR CLAUSE that modifies a word not clearly stated in the sentence. The modifier should describe, clarify, or give more detail about the **subject** of the sentence.

## TYPES:

**A. OFTEN AN EXPLETIVE (IT IS OR THERE ARE) IS PUT IN BETWEEN THE MODIFYING CLAUSE AND THE SUBJECT, BREAKING THE LOGIC OF THE SENTENCE.**

EXAMPLE: And even if a center is confident in its training, it's difficult for some families to trust that.

REWRITE IT AS: And even if a center is confident in its training, some families find it difficult to trust.

**B. MANY TIMES THE SUBJECT OF THE SENTENCE IS UNKNOWN OR UNCLEAR.**

EXAMPLE: Without taking mammograms to women, many might never have one. IT IS UNCLEAR WHO IS TAKING THE MAMMOGRAMS.

REWRITE IT AS: Without having mammograms brought to them, many women might never have one.

**C. A COMMON MISTAKE OCCURS WHEN A PHRASE SHOULD MODIFY A POSSESSIVE NOUN BUT INSTEAD MODIFIES WHAT IS POSSESSED.**

EXAMPLE: A virtual unknown....Dillard's voice....

HERE THE INTRODUCTORY PHRASE DOESN'T MODIFY HER VOICE, BUT DILLARD.

REWRITE IT AS: A virtual unknown, Dillard has a voice that ...

**D. MANY TIMES A SENTENCE IS DIVIDED BETWEEN THE INTRODUCTORY CLAUSE AND THE MAIN CLAUSE BY THE PHRASE "HE SAID." WHEN THIS OCCURS, ALL THAT IS NEEDED IS TO PUT A COMMA AFTER THE "SAID."**

EXAMPLE: Other than giving the state funds for tobacco education, Edmondson said the settlement placed bans on tobacco advertising and prevents the industry from targeting children.

**E. WHEN THE INTRODUCTORY PART IS AN ADVERBIAL CLAUSE OR PHRASE (TELLING WHEN OR WHERE), IT APPEARS THAT "he said" WHATEVER AT THE TIME OR PLACE OF THE INTRODUCTORY CLAUSE.**

EXAMPLE: After that night, he said he became bulletproof.

**See the Word Witch website at: <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~germantown/>**