Misplaced Modifiers
By: Nancy Armstrong

Modification occurs when a writer wishes to enhance or develop a noun by adding some descriptive information about that noun. “Modifiers” can be misplaced if they are not used next to the noun they are intended to modify. As such, they become misplaced modifiers.

The following are 2 examples of Misplaced Modifiers.

Incorrect: The gazebo was painted by Sarah’s fiancé in the courtyard.

This modifier is “misplaced” because it makes it seem as though “the fiancé” is specific to the courtyard. (As opposed to her fiancé in the front yard, in the house, in the garage, etc.)

Correct: The gazebo was painted in the courtyard by Sarah’s fiancé.

Incorrect: While landscaping the front yard, the dog barked at Tim’s dad.

This modifier is “misplaced” because it makes it seem as though “the dog” is landscaping the front yard.

Correct: While landscaping the front yard, Tim’s dad could hear the dog barking at him.
**Misplaced Modifiers Exercises**

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**Directions:** Rewrite each of the following sentences to correct the misplaced modifiers.

1. While cooking her famous holiday dinner, Tim noticed that his mom seemed tired.

2. The charity offered a scholarship to the needy students out of kindness.

3. In the top of the closet, he could not find his bowling ball.

4. The dog house was built by my cousin in the backyard.

5. Locked away in jail for the rest of his life, Jenna still feared the criminal.

6. I put on the suntan lotion at the beach on my nose.

7. The Olympic team won the gold medal from Hungary.

8. Terrence turned in his resignation to his supervisor with great sadness.

9. Covered with thick, dusty cob-webs, Scott decided to clean his bookshelf.

10. A candle was lit for the soldier in the old brick church.