

A Writing Center Helpful Handout

DANGLING MODIFIERS

Dangling modifiers happen when the meaning of a sentence is changed because an element of the sentence is misplaced.

Two ways to help you avoid dangling modifiers:

1. Don't place clauses too far away from the words they are supposed to modify.

Incorrect: *Having entered the theater, the music seemed to overwhelm me.*
(sounds like the music walked into the theater)

Revised: *Having entered the theater, I became overwhelmed by the music.*

2. Add the noun which the clause should modify

Incorrect: *Upon leaving the stadium, the lights began to flicker.*
(sounds like the lights left the stadium)

Revised: *Upon leaving the stadium, I noticed the lights were beginning to flicker.*

Practice:

1. Maintaining a daily exercise program, my weight seemed to decrease faster than usual.
2. To eliminate the errors, the paper needs to be rewritten.
3. While studying for my college exam, my daughter interrupted me and wanted to play dolls.
4. Drawing a quiet crowd, the auditorium was packed with Coldplay fans.
5. Running around the block, the sidewalk seemed sandier than usual.
6. While changing the baby's diapers, the powder fell on the floor.
7. Carrying the groceries to the car, my foot got stuck in a hole.
8. Upon sitting down at the restaurant, the food was waiting for us.

*Information compiled from *Writing and Reading across the Curriculum* and *Hodge's Harbrace Handbook*.