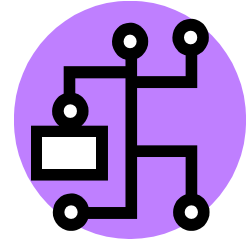


## Quick Tip of the Week

### Did you know . . .

A **modifier** is a word, phrase, or clause that somehow adds information, describes, limits, or qualifies the noun or verb in a sentence. In other words, it changes (or modifies) these other words.



Take a look at these two sentences:

1. Mary walked to the car.
2. *Exhausted*, Mary walked *slowly* to the *old*, *dented* car.

The word *exhausted* modifies Mary. *Slowly* is an adverb describing how Mary walked. The adjectives *old* and *dented* modify the car. Notice how using modifiers can really make your sentences sound better.

\*Modifiers only work well when they are put in the right places of the sentence. Imagine, if I wrote the example above like this:

Mary walked to the car *old* and *dented*.

You may ask yourself who or what is old and dented, Mary or the car?

This kind of confusion will always happen when you misplace your modifier! So be sure to insert your modifier next to the word you are wanting to qualify (and in the English language, adjectives—or modifiers—come just before the noun they modify, not after, like in the example above).

She wore a *red* ribbon in her hair—Not

She wore a ribbon in her hair which was *red*. (Is her hair or the ribbon red in this sentence?)

So far, we have talked about modifiers as *words* used incorrectly, but what happens when the modifier is a *phrase* or an entire *clause* (a simple, complete sentence attached to a dependent clause, a partial sentence)? This would be called a **dangling modifier**, and it occurs when the word it modifies does not immediately follow the phrase or clause. This, of course, confuses the reader.

*Having finished her homework*, the TV was turned on.

Notice that there is no subject in the clause (everything before the comma). Who finished the homework? Did the TV turn itself on? ... So, how do you fix this sentence?

Having finished her homework, *Jill* turned on the TV.

Easy, right! How about this sentence?

Without knowing his name, it was difficult to introduce him.

Who didn't know his name? Finding a subject for the sentence can fix this problem too.

*Because Maria didn't know him*, it was difficult to introduce him.

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