



WRITING CENTER QUICK REFERENCE DANGLING MODIFIERS

WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN A MODIFIER IS “DANGLING”?

A modifier “dangles” when what it is supposed to modify is missing from the sentence.

EXAMPLES OF DANGLING:

1. *To excel in running, strong legs are necessary.*
2. *After practicing for more than a year, the concert was cancelled.*

WHAT’S WRONG WITH THESE SENTENCES?

“*To excel in running*” is the modifier in this sentence. This phrase does not modify anything. The only word it could possibly modify is “*legs*”. Ask yourself if *legs* can excel in anything.

“*After practicing for more than a year*” is also a modifier. The only word this could possibly modify is “*concert*.” Ask yourself if a *concert* practices for more than a year.

HOW CAN YOU FIX THESE SENTENCES?

Both of these sentences need something to save the modifiers from dangling. Adding a noun or pronoun is the easiest way to fix a dangling modifier.

1. *To excel in running, **you** need strong legs.*
2. *After practicing for more than a year, **the pianist learned** the concert was cancelled.*