

# AMA Manual of Style

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## Modifiers

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A modifier describes another word or word group. Words, phrases (groups of words without a subject or predicate, usually introduced by a preposition or conjunction), and clauses (groups of words with a subject and verb within a compound or complex sentence) may all be modifiers. An adjective modifies a noun or a pronoun. An adverb modifies a verb, an adjective, another adverb, or a clause. Clauses or phrases may serve as adjectives or adverbs. | Misplaced modifiers result from failure to make clear what is being modified. Illogical or ambiguous placement of a word or phrase can usually be avoided

## Misplaced Modifiers

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Misplaced modifiers result from failure to make clear what is being modified. Illogical or ambiguous placement of a word or phrase can usually be avoided by placing the modifying word or phrase appropriately close to the word it modifies. Likewise, sometimes it is necessary for clarity to place an adverb within a verb phrase. Note the shift in meaning when the adverb is moved outside of the verb phrase. He had just called me. He had called just me. Use of the word only as a modifier poses particular problems. It must be placed immediately before the word or phrase it

## Verbal Phrase Dangers

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A participle is a verb form used as an adjective. A dangling participle implies an actor but fails to indicate correctly who or what that actor is. The following examples of dangling participles illustrate the problem. A gerund is a verb form used as a noun (see , Nouns,

Modifying Gerunds). Like the dangling participle, the dangling gerund implies an actor but does not specify who or what that actor is and sometimes may be confused with a participle modifying the wrong entity. |