

Modifiers

Defining Modifiers

Modifiers are words or groups of words that offer more information about another word in a sentence. In the following sentences, the modifiers are in bold text:

I **always** listen to the radio on my way to work.

The word **always** modifies the word **listen** because it offers more information about how often the writer listens to the radio.

Waving goodbye to her family, Jill began her road trip to Tennessee.

The words **waving goodbye to her family** modify the word **Jill** because they offer more information about what Jill was doing as she left for her trip.

People who **often** clip coupons save money on groceries.

The word **often** modifies the word **clip** because it gives more information about how frequently the clipping happens.

For Valentine's Day, Jill gave cookies **with sprinkles** to her class.

The words **with sprinkles** modify the word **cookies** because they give more information about the kind of cookies.

Using Modifiers

Modifiers are great tools for a writer, but they must be placed in the right location. Modifiers should always appear as close as possible to the words that they modify. When modifiers are placed away from the words they modify, readers become confused. Consider the following examples:

Waving goodbye to her family, the car backed out of the driveway, and Jill began her journey.

Because the modifier is placed next to the words **the car**, it sounds as if the car is waving.

For Valentine's Day, Jill gave cookies to **her class with sprinkles**.

Because the modifier is placed next to the word **class**, it sounds as if Jill's students are covered with sprinkles.

Your Turn!

To review this information and complete an interactive exercise on modifiers, please click [here](#).

Links to Additional Information

- ["Dangling Modifiers"](#) from the Purdue University Online Writing Lab

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