Modifiers

Adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases are **modifiers**, words or groups of words that tell more about, or modify, other words in a sentence. Adjectives modify nouns and pronouns. Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. Prepositional phrases can act as adjectives or adverbs.

- **As Adjective** The windmills on the hill were huge.
- **As Adverb** The horse galloped up the hill.

- To avoid confusion, place modifiers close to the words they modify. Adjective phrases usually come right after the word they modify. Adverb phrases may appear right after a verb or at the beginning of a sentence.
- The meaning of a sentence can be unclear if the modifier is misplaced.
  - **No** We read about a knight who battled giants in class.
  - **Yes** We read in class about a knight who battled giants.
- The position of *only* in a sentence can affect the sentence’s entire meaning. Place *only* directly before the word or words it modifies.
  - *Example:* Only he saw giants. (Nobody else saw them.)
  - He only saw giants. (He didn’t do anything except see.)
  - He saw only giants. (He saw nothing else.)

**Directions** Write *adverb*, *adjective*, or *prepositional phrase* to identify each underlined modifier. Write *adjective* or *adverb* to identify how a prepositional phrase is used.

1. The squire rode **behind** the knight. ____________________________
2. Don Quixote wore pieces of **rusty** armor. ____________________________
3. Bravely he battled the windmills. ____________________________
4. The lady in his dream was named Dulcinea. ____________________________

**Directions** Each sentence has a misplaced modifier. Rewrite the sentence and put the word or phrase where it belongs.

5. I sat and thought about knights in the kitchen.

6. Don Quixote **only** wanted Dulcinea, no one else.

**Home Activity** Your child learned about modifiers. With your child, read a favorite story. Ask your child to point out several adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases and explain what those words or phrases are modifying.
Modifiers

Directions Add adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases to these sentences. Use the modifiers to create a more specific, interesting picture.

1. A horse ran.

2. The sun rose.

3. Sancho saddled the donkey.

4. The knight rode.

Directions Write a sentence using each prepositional phrase below. Make sure the connection between the phrase and the word or words it modifies is clear.

5. on his head

6. in the town

7. across the fields

8. with sad eyes

Home Activity Your child learned how to use modifiers in writing. Have your child look at something he or she has written and point out modifiers. Have your child decide if any modifiers could be replaced or added to improve the writing.
Modifiers

Directions Mark the letter of the item that correctly identifies the underlined word or words in each sentence.

1. The birds awakened at dawn.
   A adjective
   B adverb
   C prepositional phrase/adjective
   D prepositional phrase/adverb

2. Don Quixote fought the giants bravely.
   A adjective
   B adverb
   C prepositional phrase/adjective
   D prepositional phrase/adverb

3. Sancho Panza was his faithful squire.
   A adjective
   B adverb
   C prepositional phrase/adjective
   D prepositional phrase/adverb

4. A knight in full armor needs his squire’s help.
   A adjective
   B adverb
   C prepositional phrase/adjective
   D prepositional phrase/adverb

5. Sancho held tightly to Don Quixote’s ankle.
   A adjective
   B adverb
   C prepositional phrase/adjective
   D prepositional phrase/adverb

6. They left the inn in the early afternoon.
   A adjective
   B adverb
   C prepositional phrase/adjective
   D prepositional phrase/adverb

Directions Mark the letter of the sentence that has a misplaced modifier.

7. A Don Quixote wanted to be a knight who battled dragons.
   B The peasants laughed when they saw the old man on his horse.
   C Several angry merchants did not laugh at his challenge.
   D We learned about peasants who revolted on the Internet.

8. A We put the books on those shelves by the door.
   B The stories tell about kings, knights, and ladies.
   C I loved the book about giants in our library.
   D Only John has read the whole series.

Home Activity Your child prepared for taking tests on modifiers. Copy a paragraph from a newspaper article, leaving blanks where modifiers go. Ask your child to suggest possible modifiers for the blanks. Compare with the original paragraph.
Modifiers

Directions Underline the prepositional phrase in each sentence. Write *adverb* or *adjective* to identify how the prepositional phrase is used.

1. We played in the park in the afternoon. __________________________
2. The sun on my head is hot and uncomfortable. ________________________
3. Jorge rides his horse along the trail. _________________________________
4. Watch that man by the tree. _______________________________________
5. You can see clearly in the bright light. ________________________________
6. The woman with the white scarf smiled warmly. ________________________

Directions Underline the adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases in each sentence. The number in () tells how many modifiers a sentence contains. (Do not underline the articles *a*, *an*, and *the*.)

7. The two knights shared a meager dinner under the trees. (3) ________________________________
8. Sancho slowly poured cold water into the pot. (3) __________________________
9. He made a thick stew that had very little meat in it. (4) __________________________
10. Hungry peasants quickly stuffed the bread in their mouths. (3) ________________
11. An army of giants was marching west through the valley. (3) ________________________

Directions Identify the misplaced modifier in each sentence. Rewrite the sentence, and put the modifier where it belongs. Underline the modifier.

12. Joyce only ate the bread—no other food. ________________________________

13. We could see cattle grazing in the distance with binoculars. ________________

14. The man waved to me with a beard. ________________________________

Home Activity Your child reviewed modifiers. Have your child use a magazine article to show you adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases that make the writing specific and interesting.