



## Common Modifiers

Modifiers in sentences make your writing more interesting to read.

### Adjectives

Adjectives describe or modify nouns or pronouns. They address what kind, which, or how many.

**Example:** A *black* cat slept on the porch.

**Example:** We felt *giddy*.

Adjectives cannot modify adverbs, verbs, or other adjectives—only nouns.

**Incorrect:** She ate her lunch quick.

**Correct:** She ate a quick lunch. (Quick describes what kind of lunch it was.)

### Adjective Clauses

Adjective clauses are dependent clauses that begin with relative pronouns such as that, which, who, whose, and whom; they allow sentence combining.

**Example:** Colorado Springs is a city. Juan lives in it.

**Alternative:** Colorado Springs is a city in which Juan lives.

### Adverbs

Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. Most adverbs end in -ly, but that is not always the case. Another clue is they address how, when, where, or why.

**Example:** Joe dances *gracefully*.

**Example:** Hallie is *extremely* tall.

Adverbs cannot modify nouns.

**Incorrect:** I have a happily dog.

**Correct:** I have a happy dog.

### Adverb Clauses

Adverb clauses modify the whole sentence and are used to explain relationships between ideas.

**Example:** Susan procrastinates. She does not want to waste time.

**Alternative:** Although Susan procrastinates, she does not want to waste time.

### Verbals

Verbals modify an entire sentence. The subject of the sentence must perform the action of the verbal. There are three kinds of verbals in English:

- to verbals  
**Example:** to eat (infinitive)
- -ing verbals

**Example:** eating (present participle)

- had verbals

**Example:** had eaten (past participle)

### **Dangling and Misplaced Modifiers**

Adverb dangling and misplaced modifiers are when a verbal's agent is not the same as the subject of the sentence it modifies, it is a "dangling" modifier. The modifier is "misplaced" if it is attached to the wrong noun.

**Incorrect:** Eager to get home, the car sped around the corner.

**Correct:** Eager to get home, Jim sped his car around the corner.

### **Need more information or assistance?**

Schedule an appointment with the [Excel Multiliteracy Center](#). We are here to provide one-on-one and group assistance to any and all UCCS students!