Avoiding Dangling and Misplaced Modifiers

Name: _____ Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10

Quick Review

A MISPLACED modifier sits too far from the word it describes, so the sentence accidentally describes the wrong word: 'Sarah saw a deer driving home from work' makes the deer the driver. A DANGLING modifier has no logical word to attach to in the sentence at all: 'Running to catch the bus, my book fell out' — the book wasn't running. Fix by (1) moving the modifier next to the right word, or (2) rewriting the sentence so the word being modified is clearly the subject. Pay special attention to 'only' — its position changes the meaning.

PRACTICE

Choose the correct answer for each question.

1. Which sentence contains a MISPLACED modifier?

A. Walking through the park, Theo found a five-dollar bill.

B. Theo found a five-dollar bill while walking through the park.

C. Theo found a five-dollar bill walking through the park.

D. While Theo was walking through the park, he found a five-dollar bill.

2. Which sentence contains a DANGLING modifier?

A. After studying all night, Priya aced the math test.

B. After studying all night, the math test seemed easy.

C. After Priya studied all night, the math test seemed easy.

D. Priya, after studying all night, aced the math test.

3. Where should 'only' go to mean 'Maria ate three cookies and nothing else'? 'Maria ate three cookies.'

A. Only Maria ate three cookies.

B. Maria only ate three cookies.

C. Maria ate only three cookies.

D. Maria ate three cookies only.

4. Which is the BEST revision of this sentence? 'Covered in chocolate sauce, my dad ordered the sundae for dessert.'

A. My dad ordered the sundae for dessert, covered in chocolate sauce.

B. Covered in chocolate sauce, the sundae was ordered for dessert by my dad.

C. For dessert, covered in chocolate sauce, my dad ordered the sundae.

D. My dad ordered the sundae, which was covered in chocolate sauce, for dessert.

5. Which sentence has its modifier placed CORRECTLY?

A. We watched the eagle land on the cliff with binoculars.

B. With binoculars, the eagle landed on the cliff while we watched.

C. Using our binoculars, we watched the eagle land on the cliff.

D. We watched, on the cliff, the eagle land with binoculars.

6. Which revision fixes the dangling modifier? 'Trying to fix the broken bike, the wrench slipped out of my hand.'

A. The wrench, trying to fix the broken bike, slipped out of my hand.

B. While I was trying to fix the broken bike, the wrench slipped out of my hand.

C. The wrench slipped out of my hand, trying to fix the broken bike.

D. Trying to fix the broken bike, the wrench, it slipped out of my hand.

7. Which sentence is correctly written so the modifier matches the intended meaning?

A. Hanging on the wall, my grandmother painted the portrait of the soldier.

B. My grandmother painted the portrait of the soldier hanging on the wall.

C. My grandmother painted the portrait, hanging on the wall, of the soldier.

D. My grandmother painted the portrait of the soldier that hangs on the wall.

8. Which sentence contains NO dangling or misplaced modifier?

A. Walking to school, the rain started to pour.

B. After waiting in line for an hour, the tickets were sold out.

C. To get a good seat at the concert, you should arrive early.

D. Riding the roller coaster, my hat blew off into the crowd.

9. Rewrite this sentence so it no longer contains a misplaced modifier. 'Coated in melted cheese, Diego devoured the plate of nachos.'

_____

_____

10. Rewrite this dangling-modifier sentence so the introductory phrase clearly attaches to a logical subject. 'After finishing the science project, the dog was finally taken for a walk.'

_____

_____

Answer Keys

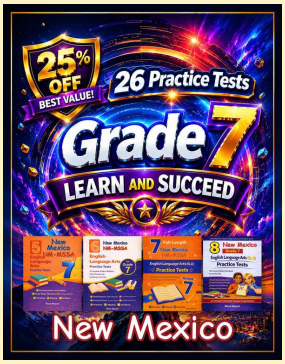
1	A	B	**C**	D	6	A	**B**	C	D
2	A	**B**	C	D	7	A	B	C	**D**
3	A	**B**	C	D	8	A	B	**C**	D
4	A	B	C	**D**	9	See below			
5	A	B	**C**	D	10	See below			

Explanations

1. C	In C, 'walking through the park' sits next to 'bill', so the sentence accidentally says the bill was walking. A places the phrase next to 'Theo' — correct. B and D rewrite using clauses that clearly attach the action to Theo. The misplacement in C is fixed simply by moving the modifier.
2. B	A dangling modifier has no logical word in the sentence to attach to. B's modifier 'after studying all night' has to describe the subject — but the subject is 'the math test', and tests don't study. A correctly attaches the modifier to 'Priya'. C rewrites the modifier as a full dependent clause with its own subject. D inserts 'Priya' as the subject of 'aced' so the modifier still attaches correctly.
3. B	The position of 'only' changes the meaning. To say Maria ate cookies and DID NOTHING ELSE, place 'only' right before the verb 'ate': 'Maria only ate three cookies'. A means no one else ate cookies. C limits the number — 'three and no more'. D is ambiguous in modern usage and typically reads as limiting the number, like C.
4. D	The phrase 'covered in chocolate sauce' should describe the sundae, not the dad. D turns the modifier into a relative clause attached directly to 'sundae' — clear and unambiguous. A moves the phrase to the end but still attaches it to the nearest noun structure, leaving the dad sauced. B uses a weaker passive rewrite. C still places the modifier far from 'sundae'.
5. C	The phrase that names the binoculars should modify 'we' (the ones using them), and it must sit next to 'we'. C does this. A leaves 'with binoculars' next to 'cliff', suggesting the cliff is wearing them. B is dangling — eagles don't use binoculars. D scrambles the sentence and still attaches 'with binoculars' to 'land'.
6. B	The modifier 'trying to fix the broken bike' has no logical word to attach to in the original — wrenches don't try. B rewrites the modifier as a full clause with its own subject 'I', so the dangling problem disappears. A keeps the wrench trying to fix the bike. C just moves the dangling phrase to the end. D adds a pronoun but the wrench is still the only available subject.
7. D	'Hanging on the wall' should describe the portrait, not the grandmother or the soldier. D uses a relative clause 'that hangs on the wall' attached directly to 'portrait' — clear. A makes the grandmother hang on the wall. B makes the soldier hang on the wall. C is grammatical but still places the phrase next to 'portrait' awkwardly and reads as if the painting is happening on the wall.
8. C	C correctly attaches the infinitive phrase 'to get a good seat' to the subject 'you', who is the one who needs the seat. A is dangling (rain wasn't walking). B is dangling (tickets weren't waiting). D is dangling (the hat wasn't riding the coaster). C avoids the trap by naming a subject that logically performs the modifier's action.

9.	**Answer:** Diego devoured the plate of nachos coated in melted cheese. (Or: Diego devoured the plate of nachos, which was coated in melted cheese.) The phrase 'coated in melted cheese' should describe the nachos, not Diego. Move the modifier next to 'nachos' or rewrite it as a relative clause attached to 'nachos'. Mark wrong if the modifier still attaches to Diego, if the student removes the modifying phrase entirely, or if the revision introduces a new dangling modifier.
10.	**Answer:** After finishing the science project, I finally took the dog for a walk. (Or: After I finished the science project, the dog was finally taken for a walk.) The original makes the dog finish the science project — a dangling modifier. Fix by either (1) changing the main-clause subject so the person who finished the project becomes the subject of the sentence, or (2) rewriting the introductory phrase as a dependent clause with its own subject. Mark wrong if the dog is still the one finishing the project, if the modifier is deleted, or if the sentence loses the connection between finishing the project and walking the dog.

Want Even More Practice? Check Out Our Other New Mexico NM-MSSA ELA Test Books!



New Mexico NM-MSSA Grade 7 ELA Preparation Bundle

26 full-length practice tests across four books (5 + 6 + 7 + 8)

No repeated questions — maximum practice value!

▼ DOWNLOAD INSTANTLY ▼

SCAN ME

Point your phone camera at the code · instant access to all four books

26 Tests!
4 Books
One Bundle

Important: All our test books contain **unique, completely different tests** from each other! Each book offers fresh practice questions — no repeats!

5 Practice Tests

- ✓ 5 complete practice tests with detailed explanations
- ✓ Perfect foundation for NM-MSSA ELA prep
- ✓ Builds confidence and test-taking skills
- ✓ High-quality questions aligned with standards

Start your practice journey!

6 Practice Tests

- ✓ 6 complete practice tests with detailed explanations
- ✓ **Unique tests** — different from the 5 tests book
- ✓ Perfect for more practice after mastering 5 tests
- ✓ Same high-quality questions aligned with standards

Take your practice to the next level!

7 Practice Tests

- ✓ 7 complete practice tests for deeper preparation
- ✓ **Unique tests** — different from 5 and 6 tests books
- ✓ Builds stamina with full-length practice
- ✓ Aligned to Grade 7 NM-MSSA ELA standards

Maximum preparation power!

8 Practice Tests

- ✓ 8 complete practice tests — our largest book
- ✓ **Unique tests** — different from 5, 6 and 7 books
- ✓ Great for final review before test day
- ✓ Builds true test stamina and confidence

Be fully prepared!

Get the bundle at EffortlessMath.com — *scan the QR code above to open the product page.*