1. **Misplaced modifiers**

*Modifiers* are descriptive words. *Misplaced modifiers* are words that, because of awkward placement, do not describe the words the writer intended them to describe. Misplaced modifiers often obscure the meaning of a sentence and make it have two possible meaning. To avoid them, place words as close as possible to what they describe.

**Examples:**

a. Clyde and Charlotte decided to have two children on their wedding day.

   *Unintended meaning:*
   
   Clyde and Charlotte decided to have two children who would magically appear on the day of their wedding.

   *Intended meaning:*
   
   On their wedding day, Clyde and Charlotte decided to have two children.

b. The students no longer like the math instructor who failed the test.

   *Unintended meaning:*
   
   The math instructor failed the test.

   *Intended meaning:*
   
   The students who failed the test no longer like the math instructor.

c. I nearly earned a hundred dollars last week.

   *Unintended meaning:*
   
   I just missed earning a hundred dollars last week. *(In fact I earned nothing.)*

   *Intended meaning:*
   
   I earned nearly a hundred dollars last week. *(I earned a little under a hundred dollars.)*

**Exercise:**

a. I saw mountains of uncollected trash walking along the city streets.

b. The child stares at the movie monster with huge, innocent eyes.

c. Charlotte returned the hamburger to the supermarket that was spoiled.

d. The biology teacher told us there would be a pop quiz with an evil grin.

e. Rita found it difficult to mount the horse wearing tight jeans.

2. **Dangling modifiers**

*Dangling modifiers* are modifiers opening a sentence without being immediately followed by the word it is meant to describe. They make the sentence have two possible meaning; the unintended and the intended ones.

**Examples:**

a. While smoking a pipe, my dog sat with me by the crackling fire.

   *Unintended meaning:*
   
   My dog smoked a pipe.

   *Intended meaning:*
   
   My dog sat with me as I smoke a pipe.

b. While eating my sandwich, five mosquitoes bite me.

   *Unintended meaning:*
   
   Five mosquitoes were eating my sandwich.

   *Intended meaning:*
   
   While I was eating my sandwich, five mosquitoes bit me.
c. Looking at the leather-skirted woman, his sports car went through a red light.  

*Unintended meaning:*  
His sports car looked at a leather-skirted woman.  

*Intended meaning:*  
He looked at a leather-skirted woman.  

**Exercise:**  
a. To join the team, a C average or better is necessary.  
b. After putting on a corduroy shirt, the room didn’t seem as cold.  
c. Covered with food stains, my mother decided to wash the tablecloth.  
d. Under attack by beetles, Charlotte sprayed her roses with insecticide.  
e. Braking the car suddenly, my shopping bags tumbled off the seat.  

### B. CAPITAL LETTERS & PUNCTUATION  

#### 1. Capital letters  

a. Write the full name of a person you know:  
b. In what city and state were you born?  
c. What is your present street address?  
d. Name a country where you would like to travel:  
e. Name a school that you attended:  
f. Give the name of a store where you buy food:  
g. Name a company where someone you know works:  
h. What a day of the week gives you the best chance to relax?  
i. What holiday is your favourite?  
j. What brand of toothpaste do you use?  
k. What the brand name of a candy or gum you like?  
l. Name a song or television show you enjoy:  
m. Write the title of a magazine you read:  

*the masked man reared his silvery-white horse, waved good-bye and rode out of town. My heart thrilled when I heard someone say, “that was the Lone Ranger. You don’t see this kind much, anymore”.*

#### Main uses of capital letters:  

a. The first word in a sentence or direct quotation.  
b. Names of persons and the word *I*.  
c. Names of particular places  
d. Names of days of the week, months and holidays  
e. Names of commercial products  
f. Names of organizations such as religious and political groups, associations, companies, unions and clubs.  
g. Titles of books, magazines, newspapers, articles, stories, poems, films, television shows, songs, papers that you write, and the like  
h. Names that show family relationship  
i. Titles of persons when used with their names  
j. Specific school courses  
k. Languages  
l. Geographic locations  
m. Historical periods and events  
n. Races, nations, and nationalities  
o. Opening and closing of a letter
2. **Punctuation**
   
a. **Apostrophe**

   **Main functions:**
   1. To show the omission of one or more letters in a contraction
   2. To show ownership or possession

   **ADD APOSTROPE + -s**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular nouns (and to plural nouns that don’t end in -s)</th>
<th>Plural nouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child’s toy</td>
<td>Children’s game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boss’s office</td>
<td>Men’s ties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My-mother-in-law’s car</td>
<td>The media’s influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The emperor of Japan’s palace</td>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. Smith’s house</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   **Plural of letters**

   - There are four s’s and four i’s in the word of Mississippi.
   - The teacher gave two A’s and ten F’s last semester.

   **Plural of abbreviations** (that have more than one period e.g. M.D., Ph.D. and so on; with –s or without is fine)

   - My mother has two Ph.D.’s: one in English and one in Philosophy.
   - My mother has two Ph.D.s: one in English and one in Philosophy. (modern English writing).

   **ADD AN APOSTROPE ALONE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To plural nouns ending in -s</th>
<th>Plural nouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students’ club</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actresses’ costume</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Smiths’ house</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Joneses’ daughters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   **SPECIAL SITUATIONS**

   **Compound nouns**

   - My mother-in-law’s car
   - The emperor of Japan’s palace
   - Everyone else’s opinion

   **Joint possession**

   - John and Mary’s wedding
   - Mr. and Mrs. Smith’s house

   **Apostrophe in contractions and in years**

   - To notice:
     - He’s
     - He’d
     - He’s a member of the class of ’04.
     - Jazz music first became popular in the 20’s.

   **Exercises:**
   1) Both of my aunt birthdays are the same day.
   2) The woman’s purse was stolen.
   3) The women’s clothing department is on the third floor.
4) The cat hurt its paw, so its licking it.
5) The Smiths have a new baby daughter.

b. **Quotation Marks**
Main functions:
1) to set off the exact words of a speaker or a writer
2) to set off the titles of short works
3) to set off words with unusual, especially ironic, meanings
4) to set off translations of foreign words

Exercise:
1) Iced-cold drinks! shouted the vendor selling lukewarm drinks.
2) Be careful not to touch the fence, the guard warned. It’s electricised.
3) Just because I am deaf, Lynn said, many people treat me as I’m stupid.
4) When Ling got her TV Guide, she read an article called Who Will Oscar Smile Upon? and thumbed through the listings to read the preview for Ally McBeal.
5) The night before his exam, he discovered with horror that the chapter Becoming Mature was missing from Childhood and Adolescence, the psychology text that he had bought secondhand.
6) The banquet consisted of a cheese sandwich and a soda.
7) German has many long words such as *Strassenbahnfuhrersgeldtasche* (streetcar conductor’s money purse).

c. **Comma**
Main functions:
1) To separate items in a series
2) To set off introductory materials
3) Before and after words that interrupt the flow of thought in a sentence
4) Before two complete thoughts connected by *and, but, for, or, nor, so, yet*
5) To set off a direct quotation from the rest of a sentence
6) For certain everyday material

Exercises:
1) Can I borrow the car tonight Dad?
2) No you can’t.
3) It’s a nice day today isn’t it?
4) The United States declared its independence from England on July 1776 in Philadelphia Pennsylvania and started a war.

d. **Other punctuations**

Exercise:
*Each of the sentences needs one of the following punctuation marks:* : _ ( )

a. The following holiday plants are poisonous and should be kept away from children and pets holly, mistletoe, and poinsettias.

b. The freeze dried remains of Annie’s canary were in the clear bottle of her bookcase.

c. William Shakespeare 1564 – 1616 married a woman eight years his senior when he was eighteen.