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From the book "Thinking Through Grammar: Sophomore"
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CHAPTER 25

CORRECTING A DANGLING PARTICIPLE BY MOVING IT

What is wrong with this sentence?

Hanging out to dry in the yard, Paul forgot about the laundry.

The sentence could be interpreted to mean that Paul was hanging out to dry. The problem is that the participial phrase (*hanging out to dry in the yard*) is next to the wrong noun. It should be next to *laundry*.

Paul forgot about the laundry *hanging out to dry in the yard*.

In the earlier incorrect sentence, the participial phrase is called a **dangling participle**. It is “dangling” because it does not seem connected to the noun it is supposed to modify. Avoid dangling participles in your own writing. If you discover a dangling participle when you reread something you have written, correct it. In some cases you can correct a dangling participle by simply moving it. Try this sample exercise.

SAMPLE EXERCISE

Instructions: Rewrite this sentence with the participial phrase moved so it does not dangle.

Swinging through the trees, the children enjoyed watching the monkeys.

Answer: _____

Answer Explanation: The participial phrase should be moved right after the noun it is meant to modify: *monkeys*.

The children enjoyed watching the monkeys swinging through the trees.

EXERCISES

Instructions: Rewrite each sentence with the participial phrase moved so it does not dangle.

1. Pacing back and forth in their cages, our children were fascinated by the tigers.

2. Covered with dust, Michelle did not recognize the value of the painting.

3. Pam watched the parade sitting by the window.

Hint: Was the parade sitting by the window?

4. **Note:** Assume the coin collection was lost in the attic.

Lost in the attic for 20 years, Judy discovered a valuable coin collection while she was looking for an old photo album.

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