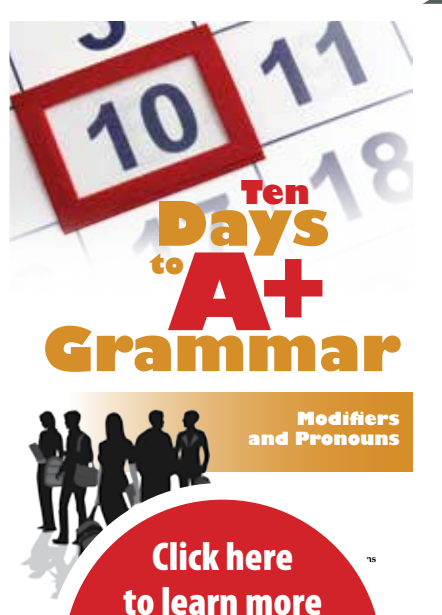




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Ten Days to A+ Grammar

Modifiers and Pronouns

by Cheryl Miller Thurston



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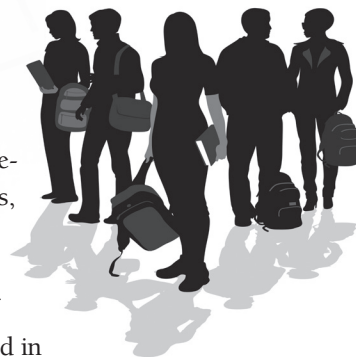
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Introduction



TEN DAYS TO A+ GRAMMAR: MODIFIERS AND PRONOUNS is designed to help students use various descriptors and pronouns correctly. After a review of some basics about adjectives, adverbs, and pronouns, students learn how to avoid common errors when using them. The daily lessons are practical, with the focus on actually *using* the modifiers and pronouns properly.

The definitions are important, and there are a few exercises that require an understanding of their functions, but using these parts of speech properly as modifiers is the element that is stressed in the lessons. Subsequent instruction will help students learn specifics about the use of modifiers—choosing the correct form of adjectives for comparison, avoiding over-used modifiers, misplaced modifiers, and dangling modifiers, including those in which the word the modifier is meant to modify is left out entirely.

The concentration is on first helping students get a general sense of modifiers and the roles they can play. Students also learn how well-chosen modifiers can add color and life to their writing.

The first lesson on pronouns helps students understand the function of pronouns and then guides them in learning the difference between subjective and objective case. Lessons and activities then give students tips and tools for knowing which case is appropriate in common constructions.

The pronoun section also addresses a number of common mistakes in pronoun usage, such as unnecessary pronouns in double subjects and unacceptable forms of pronouns.

Of course, a complete understanding of correct pronoun usage is impossible without a thorough knowledge of parts of speech and an ability to analyze and correctly identify how every word in a sentence is being used. Because that is beyond the scope of *Ten Days to A+ Grammar: Modifiers and Pronouns*, the lessons give students practical information that will guide them in the right direction for most sentences. It does not attempt to cover every possibility in the complicated world of pronoun case, nor does it try to help students distinguish between kinds of pronouns, such as demonstrative and interrogative. (Pronoun/antecedent agreement is covered in *Ten Days to A+ Grammar: Subject/Verb and Pronoun/Antecedent Agreement*.) The emphasis here is upon using pronouns correctly.

You will find that some “Day” might have more activities or quizzes than you will be able to cover; in this case, you might use them as homework assignments, as review, or as a quick reminder if a subsequent lesson takes less time than anticipated. For example, there are 50 questions in the review activity on Day #9. You should pick which ones you want the class to try to answer, as it’s unlikely that you will be able to deal with each one.

The packet contents at a glance:

1. Pretest and “Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?”
2. Helping students understand the role adjectives and adverbs play—both as single words and as clauses and phrases.
3. Giving students practical tips for using effective modifiers and guiding them in practice using modifiers in different ways.
4. Helping students learn the difference between the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and understanding when to use each.
5. Helping students recognize and correct sentences with dangling or misplaced modifiers.
6. Helping students understand the role pronouns play in our language and introducing subjective and objective case pronouns.
7. Having students learn when to use subjective case and when to use objective case pronouns.
8. Helping students learn to avoid some common errors in pronoun usage.
9. Reviewing and reinforcing the correct uses of modifiers and pronouns.
10. Final test on modifiers and pronouns.

DAY #1: Teacher Instructions

Objectives:

- To assess student ability to use modifiers and pronouns correctly
- To give students a quick overview of what they will be studying for the next ten days
- To help students understand the importance of using correct grammar

Activities:

1. **Pretest.** Give the pretest “Modifiers and Pronouns.”
2. **Overview.** After students finish the pretest, present a brief overview of what will happen over the next ten days. Students will be learning some basics about modifiers and pronouns. They will learn that modifiers can be single words (adjectives or adverbs) or groups of words (adjective and adverb phrases and clauses), and they will learn how to use both to improve their writing and avoid common pitfalls, such as dangling or misplaced modifiers. They will also learn how to choose correct pronoun case and avoid some common mistakes in choosing pronouns. On the tenth day, they will take a follow-up test to see how much they have improved.
3. **Lesson.** Present “Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?” You might present the material in the lesson in your own words, project the page for the class to see (overhead projector, interactive whiteboard, etc.), or photocopy the material and have students read along as you go over it.

If time allows, have students try to spot the errors in “Job Application Goofs.”

DAY #1: Pretest**Modifiers and Pronouns • Section A**

Directions: Some of the following sentences are unclear because of misplaced or dangling modifiers. Some of the sentences are correct. Place an “I” before each incorrect sentence. Place a “C” before each sentence that is correct.

1. ____ Wearing a gorgeous red satin gown, Chuck couldn't take his eyes off his prom date.
2. ____ I passed a hot dog to my friend that I stabbed with a fork.
3. ____ Glancing at the price of the purse that she loved, Monique knew that she was probably shopping at the wrong store.
4. ____ Yesterday, I saw a raccoon sorting through the recyclable materials.
5. ____ Driving through Nebraska, corn seemed to be growing everywhere.
6. ____ While sliding into third base, Kareem didn't even feel the pain in his right knee.
7. ____ Mr. Torres explained to his son that the black and white “squirrel” was really a skunk.
8. ____ Mr. Reynolds showed the lawnmower to his daughter that he had just bought at the discount store.
9. ____ Boiling on the stove, Ming forgot all about the eggs until they boiled dry and exploded.
10. ____ When looking for a pet, the animal's needs are important to consider.

Modifiers and Pronouns • Section B

Directions: Each of the following sentences is unclear because of a misplaced or dangling modifier. Rewrite each sentence so that the meaning is clear.

11. The stranger talked nonstop, describing the details of her wedding in the elevator.

12. Hopping briskly through the vegetable garden, Mr. Jenson saw a rabbit.

13. We saw a number of kangaroos on vacation in Australia.

14. Don't do any painting until completely mixed.

15. After laying an egg that weighed almost two pounds, the farmer showed off his prize-winning ostrich.

Modifiers and Pronouns • Section C

Directions: Some of the sentences below use adjectives or pronouns incorrectly. Place an "I" before each sentence that contains an error. Place a "C" beside each sentence that is correct.

16. ____ Of all the animals on the farm, the baby ducks were by far the cuter.
17. ____ Their house is coldest than ours.
18. ____ Me and Alfred won first place at the science fair for our project involving drain cleaner and dental floss.
19. ____ My mother was not thrilled when Grandma bought a puppy for Nadya and I.
20. ____ My uncle and me didn't even know each other.
21. ____ Blake was definitely more better than me at English.
22. ____ Him and me are going to sneak away to the concert as soon as it is dark.
23. ____ My friend Julio, he just won a scholarship to Yale.
24. ____ Shara was more prettier than anyone on the planet, in Hector's opinion.
25. ____ Looking at the Tigers and the Lions closely, the coach decided that the Tigers were the more aggressive team.
26. ____ Katharine and myself have plans to tour Italy as soon as we graduate from high school.
27. ____ Between you and me, I really don't like spending money on coffee drinks.
28. ____ Mr. Evans hisself told me that he didn't like the idea of his daughter going out with Benjamin.
29. ____ Nobody told us kids that school had been cancelled.
30. ____ I voted for Ed instead of Fred in the election. I think Ed is the more qualified candidate.

Modifiers and Pronouns • Section D

Directions: Use each of the following phrases correctly in a sentence.

31. she and I

32. Chrissie and her

33. he and she

34. my friends and I

35. my friends and me

Modifiers and Pronouns • Section E

Directions: For each item below, underline the correct pronoun in parentheses.

36. (Her, She) and I are afraid we are never going to find summer jobs.

37. Shane and Al are picking up (her, she) and him after work.

38. Between you and (I, me), I think Ethan might still believe in the tooth fairy.

39. The speaker introduced the professor and (myself, me).

40. (They, Them) and I are definitely going to be in the final round of the tournament.

DAY #1: Pretest • Answer Key

Modifiers and Pronouns • Section A

1. I
2. I
3. C
4. I
5. I
6. C
7. C
8. I
9. I
10. I

Modifiers and Pronouns • Section B

11. The stranger in the elevator talked nonstop, describing the details of her wedding.
12. Mr. Jenson saw a rabbit hopping briskly through the vegetable garden.
13. While on vacation in Australia, we saw a number of kangaroos.
14. Don't do any painting until the colors are completely mixed.
15. The farmer showed off his prize-winning ostrich after it laid an egg that weighed almost two pounds.

Modifiers and Pronouns • Section C

16. I
17. I
18. I
19. I
20. I
21. I
22. I
23. I
24. I
25. C
26. I
27. C
28. I
29. C
30. C

Modifiers and Pronouns • Section D

- 31. She and I are afraid we are never going to find summer jobs.
- 32. Shane and Al are picking up Chrissie and her.
- 33. Only he and she finished the climb.
- 34. My friends and I will arrive soon.
- 35. Send the invitation to my friends and me.

Modifiers and Pronouns • Section E

- 36. She and I are afraid we are never going to find summer jobs.
- 37. Shane and Al are picking up her and him after work.
- 38. Between you and me, I think Ethan might still believe in the tooth fairy.
- 39. The speaker introduced the professor and me.
- 40. They and I are definitely going to be in the final round of the tournament.

DAY #1: Lesson

Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?

Students often wonder why they have to bother to learn grammar.

Examples:

“It’s so picky,” they say.

“It doesn’t make sense.”

“Who cares?”

“I’m never going to need this stuff.”

The truth is, you already know a lot about grammar—a *lot*. You put together words according to an amazingly complex system of rules, and you do it without even thinking about it. It doesn’t matter what language you speak. All speakers understand a lot of grammar.

For example, if you speak English, you know that this is not a proper English sentence:

Delicious the smelled soup.

Without necessarily *knowing* that you know, you understand that the word “the” indicates that a noun is coming up. You know that in a short sentence like this, the verb is likely to follow the subject, not precede it. You know that, in order to be grammatical, the sentence needs to be rearranged like this:

The soup smelled delicious.

You also understand that the sentence would be wrong if it were:

The delicious soup smelled.

You probably also know that this sentence is incorrect:

The soup created by the chef on the stove was simmering.

You know that “on the stove” is in the wrong place, making it sound like the chef is on top of a hot stove. You also can probably fix the sentence in a flash:

The soup created by the chef was simmering on the stove. - OR - The soup simmering on the stove was created by the chef.

So if you know so much about grammar, why do you have to learn even more?

Imagine for a moment that you are learning to drive a car for the first time. Without even thinking about it, you probably know where the key goes. You know what the steering wheel is for. Because you have grown up seeing people drive cars, you probably know even more—where the brake is, where the turn signal is, where the lights are, how to turn on the radio. That doesn't mean you know everything there is about driving a car. It doesn't mean that you know the rules of the road. It doesn't mean you know what to do when the engine light turns red, how to use the jack to change a flat tire, or what to do when you see a flashing yellow light ahead. Your knowledge needs to be fine-tuned.

Similarly, English speakers need to fine-tune their knowledge of the language. A grammar error might not be as serious as some driving errors, such as driving on the wrong side of the road. However, there are many circumstances in which showing that you don't know the rules can make you appear lacking in knowledge, intelligence, or education. It may not be *true* that you are lacking, but that will be the perception.

If you know the “rules of the road” when it comes to grammar, you have a lot more power. You can use language to say exactly what you want to say in *all* circumstances.

DAY #1: Exercise**How Sharp is your English?**

Directions: The sentences below are from job interviews and job applications. Eight of the sentences contain errors that might hurt a job applicant. Write “I” for incorrect before the sentences that contain errors in pronouns or modifiers, rewrite them, and put “C” for correct and then correct before sentences without errors.

1. ____ I will call for an interview on Friday, and I hope to talk to you if your in your office.

2. ____ Another girl and I volunteered at a Veterinarian's Office. Me and her greeted all the people coming into the busy reception area.

3. ____ I do have some experience with children. I have worked as a babysitter for neighbors and also as a volunteer at a local preschool.

4. ____ My friends mentioned that I should apply here for this job. She worked for you as a receptionist for over a year.

5. ____ My work experience are varied.

6. ____ I am either applying for the position of secretary or receptionist.

7. ____ I am enclosing three letters of recommendation, which they should be enough.

8. ____ I have looked into your business that interests me and I am sending you this application.

9. ____ I am applying for a position as an intern. I have included a copy of my high school transcript, as well as list of the summer jobs I have had in the past three years.

10. ____ I saw your ad for a construction worker in the newspaper.

DAY #1: Exercise • Answer Key

How Sharp is your English?

1. I I will call for an interview on Friday, and I hope to talk to you if you're in your office.
2. I Another girl and I volunteered at a veterinarian's office. She and I greeted all the people coming into the busy reception area.
3. C CORRECT
4. I My friend mentioned that I should apply here for this job. She worked for your company as a receptionist for over a year.
5. I My work experience is varied.
6. I I am applying for either the position of secretary or of receptionist. Better, obviously, would be for the applicant to declare which job he or she wants.
7. I I am enclosing three letters of recommendation, which should be enough.
8. I Your business interests me, and I am sending you this application.
9. C CORRECT
10. I I saw your ad in the newspaper for a construction worker.