Hello, students. My name is Dr. Martina Shabram, and I will be your instructor for today's lesson. I'm genuinely excited to teach you these concepts, so let's get started.

What's today's lesson about? In this video, we're going to cover an essential grammatical tool-- the modifier. We'll learn what a modifier is, how it works and fits inside a sentence, and how to spot dangling and misplaced modifiers. So a modifier is a part of a sentence that does just what its name indicates-- it modifies or adjusts, meaning technically, a modifier is a word, phrase, or clause that provides more information about something in the sentence. Modifiers do this by pairing up with another word or phrase and slightly shifting its meaning. Let's see how that might work.

So what's the main point of this sentence? Susan on her way to the river. So that first phrase there about her behavior and emotions as she leaves, what is it doing? It's adding to our understanding of the sentence. We now know that she's not heading out to the river sadly or without her fishing gear. She's excited, and she's got her tackle ready. So the modifier alters what we know about Susan, and therefore, is situated right next to her name.

This is ideal. Modifiers-- whether they be words, phrases, or clauses-- should always be situated close to the part of the sentence that they're modifying. So what happens when we get our modifiers wrong? Well, then we end up with either a misplaced modifier or a dangling modifier. Both of these are errors that can inhibit our reader's ability to understand our sentences, so we need to fix them as soon as we see them, which is really what the editing process is for.

So when we lose track of where our modifier is and what it's meant to be doing, then we have a misplaced modifier, which is a modifier that is separate from the thing it modifies in the sentence. It does not logically modify what it is supposed to modify. Remember how I said that a modifier should come as close as possible to the thing it's modifying? This is so that we don't end up misplacing that modifier and confusing our readers about what it's supposed to be modifying.

Misplaced modifiers can create confusion about what they are meant to modify and why, or they can end up modifying the wrong thing altogether. Let's look at some examples.

What's the modifier here? If I took out where the trying on happened-- in the store-- I'd still have a full sentence that makes sense. So then we know that in the store is a phrase that's meant to modify something. But what is meant to modify? If we think about the sentence literally, it sounds like the coat was too big when the speaker tried it on in the store. But maybe it wasn't too big outside of the store, or now it's not too big. That place and time-based modifier is misplaced, and therefore doesn't clearly do its job.

So let's fix this. Now we know that the coat was too big everywhere, but I tried it on in the store, and that's where I realized it was too big. Now that the modifier is stuck right on to the thing it's modifying, we can understand the entire meaning of this sentence.

So how about you try? Here's a sentence, and here's a modifier to go with it. Where in the sentence should that modifier go? If I put it here, then what's it closest to? The guests. Are the guests somehow inside what must be very big red mugs? Well, that wouldn't make sense. So therefore, I should probably put it here, next to the coffee, because the coffee is what's being modified, and that's what's going in the mugs.

Misplaced modifiers can really influence the meaning of a sentence, because modifiers themselves are really powerful. Take this sentence. Think about how different the meaning is when I add a modifier "just" in two different spots. The former implies that it was mere moments ago that I sold my muffins. The latter implies that there may have been other things for sale, but I sold only the muffins. So be careful to think through your intended meaning and place your modifiers carefully to avoid creating unintended implications.

So what else can go wrong with our modifiers? Well, what if we add them to our sentence without actually letting them attach to their mate? Then we have what is called a dangling modifier, which is a word or phrase that modifies something not clearly identified in the sentence. Remember that modifiers are always paired with another part of the sentence. So if that modifier is all alone, it's just dangling there, unable to attach its meaning to anything else. And that can have unintended consequences as readers search for a connection where there isn't any.

Let's look at an example. What's happening in this sentence? Somehow, we've ended up with sentient milk that's fleeing the kitchen in search of something to drink. That's not a clear sentence. That's science fiction.

So what is the modifier? Thirsty. Without that word, the sentence "the milk was gone in minutes" makes a lot of sense. So thirsty is meant to modify something in the sentence, but it's missing its pair, and is thus unintentionally modifying the milk itself.

So we need, then, people to drink the milk or people to be thirsty. So let's fix this. Here, we've added in children who are thirsty and are going to drink that milk. Notice that the end result of this sentence still tells our readers that the milk is gone. The children drank up all the milk. There's nothing left. So adding in the modifier's match changes the sentence, but it doesn't change the intended meaning. Dangling modifiers create unclear, grammatically incorrect sentences, and they can cause a host of unintended meanings to spring up in the reader's minds. So be careful to always give a modifier its match and avoid science fiction sentences.

So what we we learn today? We discussed what modifiers are and how they work in sentences to add in or alter

meaning. Then we looked at the two main errors we can make with our modifiers-- dangling them and misplacing them-- and we practiced fixing those sentence errors.

Well, students, I hope you had as much fun as I did. Thank you.