



Writing Tip Wednesdays is ending the year the way we started it: with the Deadly Sins.

This series was written by Writing Tip Wednesday reader **Rick Hull**. Rick has been a health communications specialist with the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion's (NCCDPHP's) Office of the Director for 36 years, many of them as a writer-editor. He is NCCDPHP's clearance coordinator and branding ambassador, CDC's logo-licensing and co-branding coordinator, and a reviewer in CDC's system logos clearance.

His favorite quotation is "Great ideas are hogwash. Style and structure are the essence of great writing."  
—Vladimir Nabokov, *Lectures on Literature*

## Deadly Sins Extra!

Did you think there were really only seven deadly sins of scientific writing plus a wrap-up and two extras? Wrong! There's one more. Here's Rick Hull on dangling modifiers.

[End-of-sentence tack-ons](#) are the most popular type of misplaced modifier in scientific writing, but the most embarrassing kind is the **dangling modifier**. A dangler occurs at the beginning of a sentence. As usual, the rule of proximity can get you into trouble because the phrase will appear to modify the subject of the subsequent main clause.

### Example:

As a baboon who grew up wild in the jungle, I realized that Wiki had special nutritional needs.

### Revision:

I realized that Wiki, a baboon who grew up wild in the jungle, had special nutritional needs.

### Example:

Using the Reed-Frost epidemic model, only 22%–65% of the secondary cases were likely to have had at least one person-to-person contact.

### Revision:

The Reed-Frost epidemic model showed that only 22%–65% of the secondary cases were likely to have had at least one person-to-person contact.