Grammar Explanation

Correct word order in sentences (additional rules)

- When describing nouns, place the adjective clause (beginning with that, which, who, etc.) immediately after the noun or noun phrase that it describes.
  - Confusing: The company sold toys in many countries that are unsafe.
    (The countries are not unsafe; the toys are unsafe.)
  - Corrected: The company sold toys that are unsafe in many countries.

- When describing nouns, place the prepositional phrase (a phrase beginning with by, in, on, etc.) after the specific noun or noun phrase it describes.
  - Confusing: I chose an article in the sociology textbook by Helen Lee because it was the best researched article in the book.
    (Helen Lee is not the author of the textbook; she is the author of an article in the textbook.)
  - Corrected: I chose an article by Helen Lee in the sociology textbook because it was the best researched article in the book.

- When describing the entire sentence, place the prepositional phrase at the beginning of the sentence, not next to a noun. Otherwise, the sentence can be confusing.
  - Confusing: I read several articles about the importance of the environment in this class.
    (The articles are not about the environment in the class; they are about the environment in general.)
  - Corrected: In this class, I read several articles about the importance of the environment.

- When describing a verb, do not put an adverb (e.g., always, carefully) between the verb and the object.
  - Incorrect: Middle-class Americans do not have always health insurance.
  - Corrected: Middle-class Americans do not always have health insurance.

Excerpted from: Sentence Structure: Exercise 2