

The Appositive

Recognize an *appositive* when you see one.

An appositive is a noun or noun phrase that renames another noun right beside it. The appositive can be a short or long combination of words. Look at these examples:

The insect, *a cockroach*, is crawling across the kitchen table.

The insect, *a large cockroach*, is crawling across the kitchen table.

The insect, *a large cockroach with hairy legs*, is crawling across the kitchen table.

The insect, *a large, hairy-legged cockroach that has spied my bowl of oatmeal*, is crawling across the kitchen table.

Here are more examples:

During the dinner conversation, Clifford, *the messiest eater at the table*, spewed mashed potatoes like an erupting volcano.

My 286 computer, *a modern-day dinosaur*, chews floppy disks as noisily as my brother does peanut brittle.

Genette's bedroom desk, *the biggest disaster area in the house*, is a collection of overdue library books, dirty plates, computer components, old mail, cat hair, and empty potato chip bags.

Reliable, *Diane's eleven-year-old beagle*, chews holes in the living room carpeting as if he were still a puppy.

Punctuate the appositive correctly.

The important point to remember is that a nonessential appositive is *always* separated from the rest of the sentence with comma(s).

When the appositive *begins* the sentence, it looks like this:

A hot-tempered tennis player, Robbie charged the umpire and tried to crack the poor man's skull with a racket.

When the appositive *interrupts* the sentence, it looks like this:

Robbie, ***a hot-tempered tennis player***, charged the umpire and tried to crack the poor man's skull with a racket.

And when the appositive *ends* the sentence, it looks like this:

Upset by the bad call, the crowd cheered Robbie, ***a hot-tempered tennis player who charged the umpire and tried to crack the poor man's skull with a racket.***



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