

APPOSITIVES

- An appositive is a word or word group that renames a noun.

Rita, a good friend of mine, works as a police officer.

NOTE: *a good friend of mine* renames or describes the noun Rita.

- An appositive may be a noun, or it may be a group of words acting as a noun.

I like tequila, the native drink of Mexico.

NOTE: *the native drink of Mexico* describes tequila.

Her favorite exercise, walking, was denied to her by her age.

Tom stuck to his creed, to do as he pleased.

John's dog liked only one other person, me.

A born loser, Tom never got far ahead enough to buy a house.

- The appositive usually comes after the word it refers to, but in a few cases, like the last sentence above, the appositive may come first.
- If the appositive is a personal pronoun, it should be in the same case as the renamed noun.

All of our group, Ike, Phoebe, and I, left early.

He gave the prize to the shortest person, me.

- Appositives are either nonrestrictive (set off by commas) or restrictive (not set off by commas). A nonrestrictive appositive supplies additional, but nonessential, details about the noun or pronoun to which it refers. A restrictive appositive limits the meaning of the noun or pronoun to which it refers by pointing out *which one* (or *ones*).

Even Zeke Thornbush, my very best friend, let me down. (nonrestrictive)

Even my friend Zeke Thornbush let me down. (restrictive)

- Appositives are a good way to reduce wordiness in sentences. Note the following combination of sentences:

Houston is a rapidly growing city. Houston is my hometown.

By making one of the sentences an appositive, a writer can clarify the meaning of his or her thoughts:

Houston, my hometown, is a rapidly growing city.

OR

Houston, a rapidly growing city, is my hometown.