

Appositives (Restrictive and Non-Restrictive)

What is an Appositive? An appositive is a noun or noun phrase that immediately follows and renames another noun or noun phrase. In the following examples, the noun phrase *my first dog* renames the noun *Lucky*, and *Jennifer* renames *My friend*.

Lucky, *my first dog*, used to love to chase squirrels.
My friend *Jennifer* is never late.

Punctuating Appositives

If an appositive is non-restrictive—that is, if it doesn't contain essential information for identifying the noun that it follows—it is off-set by commas. In the following example, the appositive *a doctor* is helpful, but does not necessarily identify the preceding noun.

My cousin, *a doctor*, is going to join the Peace Corps.

If an appositive is restrictive—that is, if it contains essential information for identifying the noun that it follows—it does not require any added punctuation. In the following example, the appositive *David* identifies the noun that it follows:

My cousin *David* is going to join the Peace Corps.

Substituting Appositives

An appositive can replace the noun or noun phrase it renames:

My first dog used to love to chase squirrels.
Jennifer is never late.

Exercises

Underline the appositives. Punctuate them accordingly. Place an “R” next to sentences that contain a restrictive appositive and an “N” next to sentences that contain a non-restrictive appositive. Rewrite the sentence by substituting the appositive for the noun.

1. John lost his dog a small Chihuahua at the lake.
2. Julia knows Joe Montana the Hall of Fame quarterback.
3. Stephanie my cousin just bought a house.
4. My cousin Stephanie just bought a house.
5. Froilan one of my roommates is a Marine.
6. My other roommate Mike is a police officer.

Key: 1.) N 2.) N 3.) N 4.) R 5.) N 6.) R