

Appositives and Appositive Phrases

An **appositive** is a noun or pronoun placed beside another noun or pronoun to identify or describe it.

Ex. The cosmonaut **Yuri Gagarin** was the first person in space. [The noun Yuri Gagarin identifies the noun cosmonaut.]

Ex. I chose one person, **her**, to organize the volunteers. [The pronoun her refers to the noun person.]

An **appositive phrase** consists of an appositive and its modifiers.

Ex. Officer Webb, one of the security guards, caught the burglar. [The prepositional phrase of the security guards modifies the appositive one.]

Ex. Leonardo daVinci, an Italian painter known for his artworks, was also an architect, engineer, and scientist. [the word painter is the appositive, the other words that make up the appositive phrase modify the appositive.]

Appositives and appositive phrases that are **not** essential to the meaning of the sentence set off by commas. If the appositive (or appositive phrase) **is** considered essential, it is generally not set off by commas.

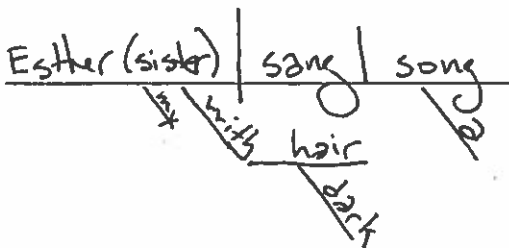
Ex. My sister, **Lana**, has blond hair. [The writer has only one sister; therefore, the appositive is not essential to the sentence and thus is set off by commas.]

Ex. My sister **Lana** has blond hair. [Here the writer does have more than one sister the appositive is considered necessary to clarify which sister is meant, thus it is not set off by commas.]

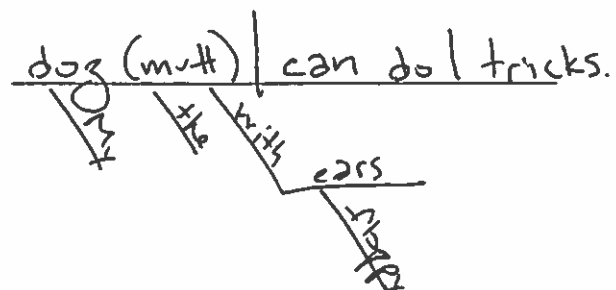
Diagramming appositives and appositive phrases

Write the appositive in parentheses immediately after the noun it modifies, and write all modifiers of the appositive (the other words in the appositive phrase) as you would normally do with adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases that modify any other noun.

Esther, my sister with dark hair, sang a song.



My dog, the mutt with floppy ears, can do tricks.



Appositive Phrases

Directions: Choose **eight** of the following sentences to diagram on a separate sheet of paper. Every word in the sentence should appear in your diagram. Below the sentences you'll see a ranking of which sentences are easy, medium, and hard, in order to help you choose which ones to do.

1. The first talking motion picture, *The Jazz Singer*, was produced in 1927.
2. An excellent student, she was first in her class.
3. Oxford University, the most famous school in England, is outside London.
4. Mr. Smith, a teacher at our school, admires appositives.
5. The police found his last address, an old hotel in Denver.
6. Atolls, small coral islands, cover tropical waters.
7. Homer, the Greek poet, was blind.
8. The children loved tortillas, a type of cornmeal pancake.
9. Holmes noticed the man, a soldier in civilian clothing.
10. Oakridge, the first street after Main, will take you there.
11. Nematodes, microscopic worms, attack the roots of cotton plants.
12. The first player got 12,000 points, a high score in this game.
13. Noel Coward wrote *Private Lives*, his best known play, in 1930.
14. The new cook, a recent graduate, was a great improvement.
15. Did the conductor see the suspect, an elderly man in a green coat?
16. Pull the switch, the red one.
17. They enrolled in the course, a five-credit class in financial accounting.
18. A hopeless romantic, I always want a happy ending.

Easy: 6, 7, 14, 18

Fairly Easy: 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13

Fairly Hard: 15, 16, 17

Hard: 3, 10