

POWER SENTENCES - USING APPOSITIVE PHRASES

Appositives are nouns or pronouns placed beside another noun or pronoun to identify or describe it. They often begin with the words *a*, *an*, or *the*. They always answer one of these questions:

Who is he? Who is she? Who are they? (*people*) What is it? (*place or thing*)

EXAMPLE: *Mrs. Fitch, a wealthy banker, donated a station wagon to our group.*

In the sentence above, *banker* is the appositive because it comes after *Mrs. Fitch* and refers to the same person.

Appositive phrases consist of an appositive and its modifiers.

EXAMPLE: *I recently saw the movie version of Persuasion, a novel by Jane Austen.*

(The noun *novel* is the appositive. The other words in the phrase are modifiers.)

Appositive phrases can occur at various places in a sentence. You may find them in the beginning of a sentence (*opener*), between a subject and verb (*s-v split*), or at the end of a sentence (*closer*).

EXAMPLES:

Opener: *A professional individualist, William T. Stead seemed almost to have planned his arrival.*
Walter Lord, *A Night to Remember*

S-V Split: *Cotton, the kitten, went up the tree but could not come down.*
Roger Duvoisin, *Petunia*

Closer: *May always liked the weird ones best, the ones you couldn't peg right off.*
Cynthia Rylant, *Missing May*

Punctuation Guidelines:

An appositive and its modifiers are usually set off by commas.

EXAMPLES: *Marilyn Winslow, the president of the company, began as a secretary.*
Sandy showed us the morning's catch, three large trout.

Exception: Commas are not used to set off short, closely connected appositives that are frequently used in combination with the words they explain.

EXAMPLES: *My friend Denise The color red The name Frances*
The word swell His sister Jane The poet Gwendolyn Brooks

An appositive is an "extra." When we omit an appositive with its modifiers from a sentence, the sentence is still grammatically correct.

EXAMPLE: *Ruth Wexler, a talented pianist, played several pieces.*
Ruth Wexler played several pieces.