

## Identifying words modified by appositives

An **appositive** identifies or renames the **noun** (or noun phrase) right before or after it.

My dog, Snoopy, has a long tail. (***Snoopy** is another name for **my dog**.*)  
Noun Phrase Appositive

Most often, **appositives** fall right *after* the nouns they refer to. Less often, they can fall right before the nouns they refer to.

Karen's bike, a shiny red model with training wheels, is brand new.  
Noun Phrase Appositive

A former World Cup finalist, my soccer coach makes us run a lot.  
Appositive Noun Phrase

My cousin Janna is funnier than my cousin Lou.  
Noun Phrase Appositive Noun Phrase Appositive

## What words make up the appositive phrase?

Before the parade, my friend Jennifer Aniston practiced her baton twirls.

Before the parade, my friend **Jennifer Aniston** practiced her baton twirls.

Courtney Cox, a master entertainer, will teach us all how to juggle.

Courtney Cox, **a master entertainer**, will teach us all how to juggle.

One of the friendliest pets I have ever met, Will Byer's dog fetches water bottles for every guest.

**One of the friendliest pets I have ever met**, Will Byer's dog fetches water bottles for every guest.

## Identifying Appositives

An **appositive** identifies or renames the **noun** (or noun phrase) right before or after it.

My dog, Snoopy, has a long tail. (*Snoopy* is another name for *my dog*.)  
Noun Phrase      Appositive

**Appositives** are surrounded by **commas** when they aren't absolutely necessary, or *essential*, to understand a sentence.

When **appositives** are essential to a sentence, they don't take commas.

Karen's bike, a shiny red model with training wheels, is brand new.  
Noun Phrase      Appositive

*Refers to*

A former World Cup finalist, my soccer coach makes us run a lot.  
Appositive      Noun Phrase

*Refers to*

My cousin Janna is funnier than my cousin Lou.  
Noun Phrase      Appositive      Noun Phrase      Appositive

*Refers to*      *Refers to*

## What does the **bold** appositive phrase refer to?

A **creative genius**, Rachel Green built a robot to do her homework.

A creative genius, **Rachel Green** built a robot to do her homework.

Ella Fitzgerald, **a hard-working gardener**, accidentally watered her flowers with Coca-Cola.

**Ella Fitzgerald**, a hard-working gardener, accidentally watered her flowers with Coca-Cola.



## Interpreting appositives without commas

An **appositive** identifies or renames the **noun** (or noun phrase) right before or after it.

My dog Snoopy has a long tail. (*Snoopy* is another name for *my dog*.)  
Noun Appositive

The meaning of a sentence changes depending on whether or not commas surround the **appositive**.

- When commas appear on either side of the appositive, the appositive is **nonessential** because the sentence would still be clear without it.
- When commas do not surround the appositive, the appositive is **essential** because the sentence is unclear without it.

My cousin Gary has a cat. (I have many cousins. One is named Gary.)  
Essential

My cousin, Gary, has a cat. (I have one cousin. His name is Gary.)  
Nonessential

*\*Note: If you were referring to someone as "Cousin Gary," the word "cousin" would need to be capitalized. In two examples in the gold box above, "cousin" is not part of the name.*

In the first example above, the name "*Gary*" is essential for us to know which cousin has a cat. In the second example, the commas suggest that "*Gary*" is nonessential because I have only one cousin.

Which option is true based on the sentence below?

Before every track meet, Justin Timberlake's teammate Addison soaks her feet in peanut butter.

He has more than one teammate

He has only one teammate

The principal of my school, Eleanor Young, cancelled class so we could have a water balloon fight.

My school has more than one principal

My school has only one principal

