

# The Appositive

**Recognize an appositive when you see one.**

An appositive is a [noun](#) or [noun phrase](#) that renames another noun right beside it. The appositive can be a short or long combination of words. Look at these examples:

The insect, a cockroach, is crawling across the kitchen table.

The insect, a large cockroach, is crawling across the kitchen table.

The insect, a large cockroach with hairy legs, is crawling across the kitchen table.

The insect, a large, hairy-legged cockroach that has spied my bowl of oatmeal, is crawling across the kitchen table.

Here are more examples:

During the dinner conversation, Clifford, the messiest eater at the table, spewed mashed potatoes like an erupting volcano.

My 286 computer, a modern-day dinosaur, chews floppy disks as noisily as my brother does peanut brittle.

Genette's bedroom desk, the biggest disaster area in the house, is a collection of overdue library books, dirty plates, computer components, old mail, cat hair, and empty potato chip bags.

Reliable, Diane's eleven-year-old beagle, chews holes in the living room carpeting as if he were still a puppy.

**Punctuate the appositive correctly.**

The important point to remember is that a nonessential appositive is *always* separated from the rest of the sentence with comma(s).

When the appositive *begins* the sentence, it looks like this:

A hot-tempered tennis player, Robbie charged the umpire and tried to crack the poor man's skull with a racket.

When the appositive *interrupts* the sentence, it looks like this:

Robbie, a hot-tempered tennis player, charged the umpire and tried to crack the poor man's skull with a racket.

And when the appositive *ends* the sentence, it looks like this:

Upset by the bad call, the crowd cheered Robbie, a hot-tempered tennis player who charged the umpire and tried to crack the poor man's skull with a racket.