

What Are Appositives and Appositive Phrases?

An **Appositive** is a noun or pronoun that is placed next to another noun or pronoun to identify or give additional information about it.

My friend's pet snake, **Slither**, slept under my grandmother's chair.
The salesperson, **Anita**, offered us a 50% discount on last year's computer model.

An **Appositive Phrase** is an appositive plus any words that modify the appositive.

This black T-shirt, **my favorite Assassins Creed shirt**, was a Christmas gift.
The most famous witch, **the evil Morgan La Fey**, is an important Arthurian character.

Notice that most appositive and appositive phrases are set off with commas since they are not necessarily "essential to the meaning" of the sentence, but do add character and color to the meaning. But, there are a few times when the appositive is necessary to fully understand the meaning of the sentence. In this instance no commas would be used.

Popular quarterback **Jared** won a full-ride scholarship to Penn State.

If an appositive **is** "essential to the meaning" of the sentence, it is considered **restrictive** and is NOT set off by commas. On the other hand, a **non-restrictive** appositive is one that adds more detail and understanding to the sentence (but is not fully needed to completely understand the meaning of the sentence) and, so, IS set off by commas.

FROM "BERNICE BOBS HER HAIR" BY F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

On the following Wednesday evening there was a dinner-dance at the country club. When the guests strolled in Bernice found her place-card with a slight feeling of irritation. Though at her right sat G. Reece Stoddard, **a most desirable and distinguished young bachelor**, the all-important left held only Charley Paulson. Charley lacked height, beauty, and social shrewdness, and in her new enlightenment Bernice decided that his only qualification to be her partner was that he had never been stuck with her. But this feeling of irritation left with the last of the soup-plates, and Marjorie's specific instruction came to her. Swallowing her pride she turned to Charley Paulson and plunged.



1920s bobbed hair—wikimedia.org

Examples:

My sister, **Clara**, picked a fight with me yesterday.

Clowns **with bright red noses** are scarier than big hairy spiders.

An elegant and well-spoken woman, Mary climbed the steps toward the podium.