APPOSITIVES

• An appositive is a word or word group that renames a noun. Here is an example:

   _Rita, a good friend of mine_, works as a police officer.

• An appositive may be a noun, or it may be a group of words acting as a noun. Here are more examples of appositives:

   _I like tequila, the native drink of Mexico._
   Her favorite exercise, _walking_, was denied to her by her age.
   Tom stuck to his creed, _to do as he pleased._
   John's dog liked only one other person, _me._
   A _born loser_, Tom never got far ahead enough to buy a house.

• The appositive usually comes after the word it refers to, but in a few cases, like the last sentence above, the appositive may come first.

• If the appositive is a personal pronoun, it should be in the same case as the renamed noun.

   _All of our group, Ike, Phoebe and I_, left early.
   _He gave the prize to the shortest person, me._

• Appositives are either nonrestrictive (set off by commas) or restrictive (not set off by commas). A nonrestrictive appositive supplies additional, but nonessential, details about the noun or pronoun to which it refers. A restrictive appositive limits the meaning of the noun or pronoun to which it refers by pointing out _which one_ (or _ones_).

   _Even Zeke Thornbush, my very best friend, let me down._ (nonrestrictive)
   _Even my friend Zeke Thornbush let me down._ (restrictive)

• Appositives are a good way to reduce wordiness in sentences. Note the following combination of sentences:

   _Houston is a rapidly growing city. Houston is my hometown._

By making one of the sentences an appositive, a writer can clarify the meaning of his or her thoughts:

   _Houston, my hometown, is a rapidly growing city._ -or-
   _Houston, a rapidly growing city, is my hometown._

For more information on appositives, see the handout "Phrases."