**Grammar Lesson 13: The appositive**

A [noun](http://grammar.about.com/od/mo/g/nounterm.htm), [noun phrase](http://grammar.about.com/od/mo/g/nounphraseterm.htm), or [series](http://grammar.about.com/od/rs/g/series09term.htm) of nouns placed next to another word or phrase to identify or rename it.

[Nonrestrictive](http://grammar.about.com/od/mo/g/nonrestricterm.htm) appositives are usually set off by [commas](http://grammar.about.com/od/punctuationandmechanics/a/punctmatters07.htm), [parentheses](http://grammar.about.com/od/pq/g/parenthterm.htm), or [dashes](http://grammar.about.com/od/d/g/dashterm.htm). (See *Observations*, below.)

An appositive may be introduced by a word or phrase such as *namely, for example*, or *that is*.

Richard Norquist, <http://grammar.about.com/od/ab/g/apposterm.htm>

Identify the following appositives. What information do they add to the noun?

* "Though her cheeks were high-colored and her teeth strong and yellow, she looked like a mechanical woman, *a machine with flashing, glassy circles for eyes*."  
  (Kate Simon, [*Bronx Primitive*](http://grammar.about.com/od/shortpassagesforanalysis/a/katesimonsketch.htm), 1982)
* "The hangman, *a grey-haired convict in the white uniform of the prison*, was waiting beside his machine."  
  (George Orwell, ["A Hanging,"](http://grammar.about.com/od/classicessays/a/orwellhanging.htm) 1931)
* Over the last decade William Langewieshe has been fascinated by the modern-day frontier—those wild places that stubbornly defy all efforts of control. Nathaniel Philbrick, “Waterworld,” 5.
* Ten days after the war ended, my sister Laura drove a car off a bridge. Margaret Atwood, *The Blind Assassin*, 1.

**Renaming the noun can also be a form of appositive.**

His rage passes description—the sort of rage that is only seen when rich folk that have more than they can enjoy suddenly lose something that they have long had but never before used or wanted. J.R. R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*, 208.

And at those time there would come a hush—a hush quivered by voiceless words. Carson McCullers, The Member of the Wedding, 149.

**Putting it together.**

1. Circle the appositives in the passage below. What do they add to the nouns they rename? What new information do they give?

How can a bird feed its young if it has no consciousness of before and after? A conscience, Yero my hero, is only consciousness in another dimension, the dimension of time. What you call conscience I prefer to call instinct. Birds feed their young without understanding why, without weeping about how all that is born must dies, sob sob. I do my work with a similar motivation: the movement in the gut toward food, fairness, and safety. I am a pack animal wheeling with the herd, that’s all. I’m a forgetable leaf on a tree. Gregory MaGuire, *Wicked*, p. 199.

1. Write a description of an automobile that includes appositives for the following five items: license plate, driver, wheel, speed, steel