What Is an Appositive?

Name: _____



We use appositives in spoken English all the time. An appositive is a word or phrase that identifies a noun or gives additional information about a noun. Usually the word or phrase is either a noun or a noun phrase, but not always. The appositive is usually next to the noun it is identifying or clarifying.

Example:

Emily's eldest brother, Sam, climbed on the bus.

In the sentence "brother" is a noun. "Sam" is the appositive, because it means the same thing as "Emily's oldest brother," but it gives more information (clarifies) by telling the reader the name of the brother.

Keep in mind:

Appositives are complicated!

- There can be appositives with any noun, not just the subject.
- They often, but not always, follow the noun. They can come before the noun or even later in the sentence.
- There may be commas around the appositive, but not always. It depends on the meaning of the sentence. Sometimes there are even dashes or parenthesis around an appositive.

In each of the following sentences, underline the appositive and circle the noun it is referring to.

1. His friend Tom went on vacation.

2. My car, the red one with a white top, is out of gas.

3. The class played their favorite game, soccer, at recess.

4. Soccer, a popular sport in France, is played with a black and white ball.

5. The largest state in the U.S., Alaska was one of the last to be admitted as a state.

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