

# *Unit Ten* Modifying Nouns with Appositives

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## **SAMPLE PARAGRAPH EXERCISE**

As much as San Francisco can claim to be the home of trends, the city's real charm springs from its ability, as Saroyan said, "to invite the heart to come to life." This has been true since its beginning. The Ohlone Indians gloried in the fecundity of the Bay. Now we share in the glory. San Francisco has always been a city that exalts the senses with its many interesting attractions and well-defined neighborhoods. San Francisco is a city that changes by the moment, each moment offering a new inspiration. San Francisco has always been a city of views and all of these views culminate in the experience of viewing the city's defining quality.

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**Now skip the next paragraph and read the passage on the next page.**

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As much as San Francisco can claim to be the home of trends, the home of citizens who are earnestly engaged in trying out new techniques to survive and enjoy an uncertain future, the city's real charm springs from its ability "to invite the heart to come to life," as Saroyan, an author and real life-embracer and hellraiser, said. This has been true since its beginning, the founding of San Francisco. The Ohlone Indians, the first humans to settle around the Bay, gloried in the fecundity of the Bay, the beauty that the land offered to them, the beauty that we, the current inhabitants of San Francisco, glory in today.

San Francisco has always been a city with much to offer, a city that exalts the sense with its many interesting attractions—fine restaurants, raucous taverns, elegant mansions, exciting music scene—and well defined neighborhoods—the Sunset, North Beach, Fisherman's Wharf—all which entice visitors from far away. San Francisco is a city that changes by the moment, each moment offering a new inspiration, a new view.

San Francisco has always been a city of views: views from atop Twin Peaks where the city, a glistening jewel, the "cool grey city of love," is spread out before you; views down California Street seen from a cable car as you ride past the hustle and bustle of downtown, the scurrying traffic, the racing business people, the meandering tourists. And all of these views culminate in the experience of viewing the city's defining quality, the blue of the Bay.

**Underline the noun phrase appositives that have been added to this passage.**

What are some of their defining characteristics?

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As much as San Francisco can claim to be the home of trends and ideas, the city's real charm springs from its ability, as Saroyan said, "to invite the heart to come to life." San Francisco is the home of citizens who are earnestly engaged in trying out new techniques to survive and enjoy an uncertain future. Saroyan is an author and a real life-embracer and hellraiser. This has been true since its beginning. San Francisco began when it was founded. The Ohlone Indians were the first humans to settle around the Bay. The Ohlone Indians gloried in the fecundity of the Bay. The land offered a lot of beauty. Now we share in the glory. We are the current inhabitants of San Francisco.

San Francisco has always been a city that had much to offer and that exalts the senses with its many interesting attractions and well-defined neighborhoods. The attractions include fine restaurants, raucous taverns, elegant mansions, exciting music scene. The neighborhoods include the Sunset, North Beach, Fisherman's Wharf. The attractions and neighborhoods entice visitors from far away. San Francisco is a city that changes by the moment, each moment offering a new inspiration. Each moment also offers a new view.

San Francisco has always been a city of views and all of these views culminate in the experience of viewing the city's defining quality. There are views from atop Twin Peaks where the city is spread out before you. The city is a glistening jewel and the "cool grey city of love." There are views down California street seen from a cable car as you ride past the hustle and bustle of downtown. The hustle and bustle is characterized by scurrying traffic, by racing business people, and meandering tourists. The city's defining quality is the blue of the Bay.

**How does this passage differ from the first one?**

**Now read the second passage.**

**How does the second passage differ from the other two?**

**Underline the noun phrase appositives that have been added to the second passage.**

# NOUN PHRASE APPOSITIVES

Among the words that can modify nouns are nouns themselves. For instance, we sometimes use noun modifiers next to (before or after) the nouns they describe.

The cab driver opened the door for his passenger, a tall woman in a strapless red dress.

*Woman* is a noun that makes it clear to the reader who the passenger is; the word *woman* plus the modifiers *tall* and *in a strapless red dress* rename *passenger* in a specific way. We call the underlined descriptive phrase an appositive, which is a word or phrase containing a noun that renames the noun it modifies. More Examples:

My best friend, a cat with a loud purr, always knows how to cheer me up.

She went to see Humphrey Bogart in a romantic movie, the fifth one she'd seen in a week.

Marvin, a straight A student in chemistry, ignited his lab partner's hair with the Bunsen burner, a device Marvin should never have touched.

## Punctuation with Appositives

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Set off single modifying phrases with commas:

Carlos met his girl friend at the health club, the local hangout.

If the appositive comes in the middle of a sentence, enclose it in commas:

Carlos met his girlfriend, a disc jockey, at the health club.

Set off a series of appositives with long or double dashes:

Carlos and his girlfriend enjoy similar things--cartoons, Diet Coke, spandex leotards, and mirrors.

Their friends—sun-tanned gods and goddesses, the state's best aerobic instructor, and the local DJ—like to get together to party.

Or you can also use a colon to set off a list of appositives at the end of a sentence:

Bart wrote the following items on his shopping list: Frostie Fritters Cereal, strawberry milk, hot dogs, canned dog food, and paper towels.

## Exercise One The Ski Trip

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Combine the sentence pairs by eliminating in the second sentence, the noun that repeats the noun in the first sentence. Also eliminate any forms of the verb *be* so that you reduce the second sentence to an appositive phrase that modifies the underlined noun in the first sentence.

EXAMPLE: Most students cannot wait until semester break.  
~~Semester break is~~ a time to relax and forget about deadlines and exams.

SOLUTION: Most students cannot wait until semester break, a time to relax and forget about deadlines and exams.

1. Sammy found herself bored on her winter break from school.  
Sammy was a short, red-haired drama major.
  
2. So Sammy called her friend Rhoda.  
Rhoda was a tall, brown-haired physics major.
  
3. Finally, Sammy and Rhoda decided to go on a ski trip.  
The trip was a fun, fantastic, fantasy escape.
  
4. First, they made reservations at the Big Bear Hut.  
The Hut was a ski lodge in Bear Valley.
  
5. Then Sammy and Rhoda rented their supplies.  
The supplies were skis by Rossignol and boots by Fischer.

6. But then the two friends took their most important step.  
The step was a trip to the mall for sexy ski wear.
  
  7. Sammy found some gorgeous clothes.  
The clothes were emerald green stretch pants, a matching shirt, and a white vest.
  
  8. Rhoda also found some sexy separates.  
The separates were light blue stretch pants, a navy blue turtleneck, and a multicolored vest.
  
  9. Sammy and Rhoda packed their ski clothes and their best party garb.  
The garb was the kind that would lure any man their way.
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## Exercise Two Not So Typical Music Listeners

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Combine each group of sentences below by reducing the last two sentences in each group to appositives that modify nouns in the first sentence. Note that the nouns aren't underlined, so look to see what is being repeated and cross out repeated nouns and forms of the verb *be* before you do any sentence combining.

EXAMPLE: Most people enjoy music.  
~~The people are~~ those of any age.  
~~Music is~~ a kind of medicine for the soul.

SOLUTION: Most people, those of any age, enjoy music, a kind of medicine for the soul.

1. Heavy Metal is supposed to attract crowds of long-haired, maladjusted teens.  
Heavy Metal is music with loud electric guitars and drums.  
The maladjusted teens are young people who rebel against their parents.
  
2. But my Uncle Walter enjoys listening to Heavy Metal.  
Uncle Walter is a 40-year-old, bald accountant.  
His Heavy Metal is usually some song by Arrows and Petunias.
  
3. On the other hand, modern rock is supposed to attract hordes of modern teenagers.  
Modern rock is music featuring vocals and acoustics.  
The teenagers are boys who are addicted to MTV and girls who dream of dating the lead singers.
  
4. But my Aunt Wilma listens to modern rock.  
Aunt Wilma is a 50-year-old housewife.  
Modern rock is any new release by D-Fresch Load.

5. Soft rock is supposed to attract people like Walter and Wilma.  
Soft rock is background music often played in elevators.  
Walter and Wilma are people who wear polyester suits.
  
  6. Yet Walter and Wilma's 13-year-old daughter loves listening to soft rock.  
Their daughter is Winnifred.  
Soft rock is any Barry Manilow song that plays in elevators or dentists' offices.
  
  7. Rap music songs are supposed to attract only adolescents.  
The songs are usually popular ballads that need no instruments.  
The adolescents are those with asymmetrical Bernie Brown haircuts.
  
  8. However, Walter's mother really gets into Rap.  
Walter's mother is a 75-year-old woman with arthritis.  
Rap is her excuse to limber up her joints and idolize Lazy B.
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## Creating Appositives

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Writers can use noun phrase appositives effectively to give readers helpful, specific information and to condense their many ideas in a logical and sophisticated way. In the previous exercises, you practiced combining sentences; in the following exercise, you will create some of your own appositives. The nouns to be modified are underlined, and blanks are provided so that you can add specific information with appositives.

EXAMPLE: Too many people today need to find a suitable companion,

SOLUTION: Too many people today need to find a suitable companion, a dog who loves them unconditionally, a cat who keeps them warm at night, a guinea pig who never complains about the cooking, or a spouse with a large bank account.

### *Exercise Three* Alfred and Edward

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1. My friend Alfred spends his afternoons watching his favorite program on "Trash TV.,"  
\_\_\_\_\_
  2. On the other hand, my cousin Edward spends his afternoons at his favorite video stores in the mall—  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  3. Finally bored with their usual pastimes, Alfred and Edward met me last Friday at my favorite club,  
\_\_\_\_\_
  4. Alfred and Edward, two \_\_\_\_\_, danced the night away with some lovely girls, and they learned some of the following songs:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  5. But the next day, Alfred went back to his old habit, \_\_\_\_\_,  
and Edward went back to the local mall, \_\_\_\_\_.
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## *Exercise Four* Four Madge and Mordred

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What follows is a hypothetical love story, one that features the meeting and eventual marriage of Madge and Mordred. You are to fill in the blanks with noun phrase modifiers (appositives). If you have any difficulty coming up with appositives, try asking yourself some questions about the underlined nouns.

Madge, (1) \_\_\_\_\_, was a newly divorced woman. So she decided to try a computer dating service and called her friend Mary Frances, (2) \_\_\_\_\_, someone who had signed up with many agencies in the past. Mary Frances told Madge to contact the Best Bet Dating Spa, (3) \_\_\_\_\_. Mary Frances promised Madge that she was sure to meet with success. On Saturday morning, Madge left her apartment, (4) \_\_\_\_\_, and set out for the Best Bet Spa. The spa, on the corner of Fifth Street and Vine, looked like an impressive structure, (5) \_\_\_\_\_. Inside, Madge met the director, Mr. Rogers, (6) \_\_\_\_\_, someone she felt very comfortable talking to. After she filled out the application, she went home and waited. Later that week, Madge's phone, (7) \_\_\_\_\_, rang. A young man named Mordred was on the line and said, in a voice that grabbed Madge immediately, that he had gotten her number from Best Bet. Mordred said he knew they were meant for each other when he heard that they like the same kinds of music—(8) \_\_\_\_\_. Mordred also suggested that they go on a date the next week, and Madge readily accepted, agreeing to meet him on Friday night at Woof, Purr, Whistle and Thump, his favorite hangout, (9) \_\_\_\_\_. When they met, Madge first noticed Mordred's eyes, (10) \_\_\_\_\_, and Mordred fell in love with Madge's feet, (11) \_\_\_\_\_. Actually, it was love at first sight for both. Married now for three years, Madge and Mordred share their dreams, (12) \_\_\_\_\_.

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## *Exercise Five* You Be the Author

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1. Write a sentence in which you use an appositive to describe a movie or a singing group you enjoy.
2. Write a sentence in which you use an appositive to describe a car you would enjoy driving.
3. Write a sentence in which you use an appositive to describe your best friend.
4. Write a sentence in which you use an appositive to describe your favorite form of entertainment.
5. Write a sentence in which you use an appositive to describe your favorite place.

Next, write five sentences about the topic you're currently writing about in your writing class, and try to use appositives to describe some of the nouns in your sentences.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

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## Sense of Time *Review Exercise 7*

Join the sentences below by adding noun modifiers (adjectives, prepositional phrases, and appositives) to the base sentences and by joining sentences using coordinators, subordinators, and parallel structures. The nouns to be modified are underlined, and joining techniques are given in brackets. Cross out any repeated words and forms of *be* in the sentences containing modifiers.

EXAMPLE: Most of us think about our future.  
~~The future is~~ the next hour.  
~~The future is~~ the next day.  
~~The future is~~ the next week.  
[*coordinator—contrast*] The future may be years from now.

SOLUTION: Most of us think about our future—the next hour, the next day, or the next week—but the future may be years from now.

1. [*subordinator—time*] We think about the future.  
We are forced to make decisions.  
The decisions are about our education, career, and family.  
The decisions are based on our motivation.  
The decisions are based on our attitude toward risk-taking.  
The decisions are based on our sense of obligation.
2. Some people need to make plans for the rest of their lives.  
These people are future-oriented.  
These people are the ones who make daily lists of their goals.  
[*subordinator—contrast*] Other people live each day as if it were their last.  
These people are present-oriented.  
These people are the ones who live for the moment.
3. All research studies agree that our "time sense" can greatly affect our lives.  
[*coordinator—contrast*] Some studies have shown that attitudes toward the future differ according to age, sex, income, and occupation.

4. According to a study done by Alexander Gonzales, most adults are more concerned about the future than teenagers are.  
The adults are those 40 years old or older.  
**[coordinator—result]** This future planning is a tendency that increases with age.
  
5. In addition, the study claims that middle-aged men are more likely to plan for the future than middle-aged women are.  
The men are generally fathers and professionals responsible for their family's financial security.  
The women are usually housewives and mothers who have achieved their goals.  
**[coordinator—contrast]** Perhaps these attitudes will change as women and men change their expectations.  
The expectations are of their roles in society.
  
6. People who earn poor salaries worry mainly about the present.  
The salaries are incomes less than \$16,000 per year.  
**[coordinator—contrast]** They may tend to be fatalistic individuals.  
The individuals are people who believe that for them, no future exists.
  
7. People tend to fall into both camps.  
The people are with higher incomes.  
The camps are those who live for the moment.  
The camps are those who make goals and subgoals.  
**[coordinator—reason]** These people can afford to make choices.
  
8. Finally, according to the study, most people tend to pick certain occupations for themselves.  
**[subordinator-reason]** They may already have the time sense needed for the chosen occupation.