



Appositives

Combining sentences by adding appositives makes writing more concise and focuses the sentence on the most important ideas.

A Simple Example

“John is the coach of the basketball team. The team had a very successful season, winning 79 out of 100 games.”

The first sentence serves as an entry point to the student’s thinking process, but a later writing stage can unite those two ideas:

“The team, coached by John, had a very successful season, winning 79 out of 100 games.”

A More Complex Example

“Watson and Crick were the lead scientists who discovered DNA’s double helix shape. This discovery led to profound advances in the mapping of the human genome and the manipulation of DNA strands.”

Using an appositive, these sentences can focus more meaningfully on content.

“The discovery of DNA’s double helix shape, pioneered by Watson and Crick, led to profound advances in the mapping of the human genome and the manipulation of DNA strands.”

Such restructuring forces a strengthening of verbs (“pioneered” instead of “were”) but also increases the sentences’ sophistication by removing unnecessary words and a sentence that contains minimal information.

Why It Works

While this technique seems fairly obvious, without the specific direction to combine sentences using appositives, students might struggle to see precisely how to “reduce wordiness.” The sentences feel so fixed that students – who may see the wordiness but not know how to change it – need the specific instruction of making sentences into appositives. After seeing a few examples, students can turn that general sense of wordiness into action.