

RELATIVE CLAUSES

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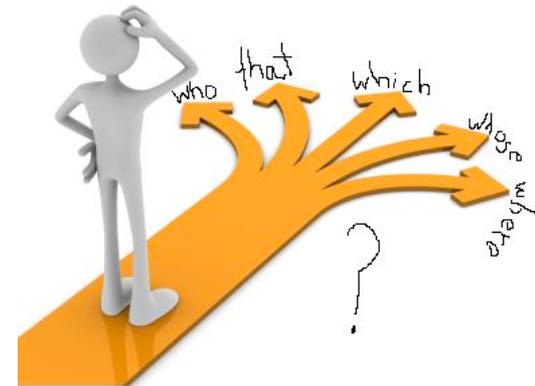
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1. Relative Pronouns

A **relative pronoun** links two clauses into a single complex sentence.

1. *This is a house. Jack built this house.*
2. *This is the house **that** Jack built.*



Sentence (2) consists of two clauses, a main clause (*This is the house*) and a relative clause (*that Jack built*). The word *that* is a relative pronoun.

Relative Pronouns begin a subordinate clause and connect that clause to another noun that precedes it in the sentence.

Relative pronouns: *who, whom, whose, whoever, whomever, which, whichever, that, what, whatever.*

Examples

It is a book *that* is difficult to ignore.

The dog, *which* is a terrier, is four years old.

I will consider renting or buying, *whichever* works out best.

All relative pronouns do not change the form with gender, person, or number. Only *who* changes form with case.

Subject: *who*

Object: *whom*

Possessive: *whose*

Examples

The girl *who* told me the story lives down the street.

The girl *whom* I chose will get a present.

I am not sure *whose* that bag is.

Relative Pronouns

	People	Things/ideas
• Subject	who	which or that
• Object	whom	which or that
• Possessive	whose	whose

Examples:

1. People *who* study physics are usually very intelligent.
(**'people' is the subject of the verb 'study'**)
2. To *whom* did you give it? (**'whom' is the object of the preposition 'to'**)
- 3 That's the man *whose* car was stolen last week.
(**'whose' indicates who the car belongs to**)

2. Relative adverbs

WHEN = in/on which (time)

WHERE = in which (place)

WHY = for which (reasons)

WHAT = that which

*The year **in which** he died = The year **when** he died*

*The day **on which** she arrived = The day **when** she arrived*

*The house **in which** he lived = The house **where** he lived has no running water.*

*"**What** I mean is this..."*

3. Relative clauses

A relative clause, also called **adjective clause**, **subordinate clause** or **dependent clause**, is a clause introduced by a relative **pronoun** (*who*, *whom*, *whose*, *which*, *that*) or a relative **adverb** (*where*, *when*, *why*).

Ex. Isn't that the woman *who/that lives across the road from you?*

who/that lives is the relative clause.

This clause can not stand by itself but must be combined with an independent or main clause.

A relative clause:

- is a group of words related to a noun (or a pronoun);
- comes after the noun it relates to;
- has its own subject and verb;
- identifies or gives extra information about people, things, possessions, places, times, and reasons;
- it is linked to the rest of the sentence by relative pronouns or adverbs.

The students **who/that sit in the front row** are from China. (identifies which students)

The Structure of relative clauses

A relative clause **always** immediately follows the noun it modifies.

The relative pronoun (*that, who, which, whom, whose*) may be the subject of the clause, although not always.

Ex. He didn't like the girl **whom/ that** he met at the party yesterday.

Relative Clauses

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graph TD; A[Relative Clauses] --> B[Restrictive]; A --> C[Non-restrictive]; B --> D[Essential]; B --> E[Defining]; C --> F[Non-essential]; C --> G[Non-defining];
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Restrictive
Essential
Defining

Non-restrictive
Non-essential
Non-defining

4. Defining relative clauses

Defining relative clauses give **essential information** about the person, animal or thing we are talking about. Without the information in the defining relative clause, the sentence would not make sense. **Commas are not used** in this type of clause.

e.g. People **who live in New York** lead very busy lives.

In defining relative clauses 'that' can be used instead of 'who and which'.

e.g. This is a subject **that** (which) is hard to see.
People **that** (who) live in New York lead very busy lives.

We **can omit** 'whom, which, that' when they are the **objects** of a relative clause:

e.g. Those are the lotus plants **which** I like very much.

→ Those are the lotus plants I like very much.

People **whom** he sees are of various kinds.

→ People he sees are of various kinds.

5. Non-defining relative clauses

We use non-defining relative clauses to give **extra information** about the person, animal or thing we are talking about. This information is not essential to the meaning of the sentence. Non-defining relative clauses are separated from the main sentence by **commas**.

e.g. My sister, **who lives in New York**, works for the GMC.

We **can not use 'that'** in non-defining relative clauses.

e.g: The Empire State Building, **which used to be the tallest building in the world**, is still a popular tourist attraction.

We **cannot omit** the relative pronoun in non-defining relative clauses.

e.g. Dr Lee, **whom** I met yesterday, teaches Chemistry.

6. Punctuation of relative clauses

Compare the meaning:

- We took some children on a picnic. The children, **who wanted to play football**, ran to an open field as soon as they arrived at the park.
- We took some children on a picnic. The children **who wanted to play football** ran to an open field as soon as they arrived at the park.

7. Defining vs non-defining relative clauses

DEFINING	NON-DEFINING
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give essential information <p><i>I didn't eat the pie that was in the fridge.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Without commas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give extra information <p><i>Mary, whose son is a TV star, is a very dear friend.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• With commas

DEFINING

- Can use 'that' instead of *who* and *which*.

*This is a subject **that** (which) is hard to see.*

- Can omit 'whom, which, that' when they are the objects

Those are the lotus plants I like very much.

NON-DEFINING

- Can not use 'that'

*The Empire State Building, **which used to be the tallest building in the world**, is still a popular tourist attraction.*

- Cannot omit relative pronouns

*Dr Lee, **whom** I met yesterday, teaches Chemistry.*