

Relative Clauses



Relative Clauses are clauses introduced into a main sentence by a relative pronoun or adverb. We use them in order to add supplementary information about a specific item of the sentence.

❖ The relative pronouns and adverbs which may introduce a relative clause, are :

- **Who** is used to refer to people.
- **Whom** is used to refer to people when there is a preposition inside the sentence referring to this *Who*.
- **Which** is used to differentiate people or things from a total of numerous equal things.
- **Whose** is used to demonstrate possession.
- **When** is used to express time.
- **Why** is used to show reason.
- **Where** is used to show place.

Examples

1. This is my father who is a doctor.
2. My father, who is 65 years old, is a doctor.

∩ Relative Clauses are divided into two types

- ✓ The **Defining Relative Clauses**, which describe the noun of the sentence and they cannot be removed from the sentence without leaving the meaning incomplete.
- ✓ The **Non-Defining Relative Clauses**, which offer extra information about a previously defined noun and can be removed from a sentence without changing or confusing the meaning. These type of sentences are more frequent in written English.

This type of relative clauses are always separated from the rest of the sentences by commas.



A. Defining Relative Clauses.

These are the students who I teach.

This is the book which I love.

1. When a relative clause:

- Is Defining and
- Is introduced by "who" or "which".

Then, if we want, we can replace "who/which" by "That".

Ex. This is the student who studies hard.
This is the student who I teach.

2. When a relative clause:

- Is Defining
- Is introduced by "who" or "which" and
- The relative pronoun "who" or "which" plays the role of the object of the relative sentence, regarding its syntax

Then, if we want, we can completely omit the relative pronouns "who" or "which".
Therefore the first sentence would result in "These are the students I teach".

B. Non-Defining Relative Clauses.

Ex. The children, who were playing in the garden, felt happy.

The book, which was published last summer, was an instant success.

1. When a relative clause:

- Is Non-Defining
- Has the sequence "who/which + be + present/past participle (doing/done)

Then, the relative pronoun and the verb "be" can be omitted.

The children, playing in the garden, felt happy.

The book, published last summer, was an instant success.

General Notes

- If a relative pronoun is followed by a preposition, the preposition may come before the relative pronoun (formal style) or at the very end of the sentence (informal style).
ex. The key with which the door had been locked couldn't be found.
The blog that my articles are published in is rapidly growing.
- In order to show possession when we refer to things, we can also use *noun + of which/that*.
ex. We discovered an amazing small bistro the name of which I cannot remember.
- *Which* can refer to a whole situation that is described in the main clause.
ex. He was obviously lying, which only made matters worse.
- The words *whatever, whoever, whichever, wherever, and whenever* can be used to replace relative pronouns. We may use them to talk about people or things that are indefinite or unknown.
ex. Let's travel wherever you want!
- *What* can never be used as a typical relative pronoun after a noun or a pronoun. *What* can replace a noun.
ex. I haven't booked the tickets that you requested yet.
I haven't done what you told me.

Some practice

- Write one sentence using a relative clause to combine the sentences without repetition. Make any unnecessary changes.
 1. Jane Austin was a writer. She has written *Pride and Prejudice*.
 2. The Cycladic Civilisation spread in the Cycladic islands of the Aegean Sea. It was one of the most significant civilisations of the ancient world.
 3. We traveled to New York. We visited all the famous landmarks there.
 4. The parcel was addressed to a girl. That girl doesn't live here anymore.
 5. He won 1.000.000.000 euros on the lottery. It was unbelievably lucky of him to do so.
 6. This is my best friend. Her business is expanding to a lot of countries.
 7. This is my dog. He sits on my lap when I study.
 8. This is the next business plan. It was created two days ago.

9. This is my niece. Her favourite game is chess.

10. Paris is a popular destination. A lot of people go there every year.