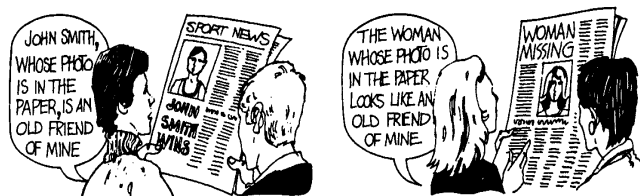


RELATIVE CLAUSES: DEFINING AND NON-DEFINING

Look at these examples and compare:

- A** The lemon trees which were given some of that fertiliser produced very good fruit.
B The lemon trees, which were given some of that fertiliser, produced very good fruit.



In sentence **A**, the relative clause is essential to the meaning of the sentence. The relative clause tell us **which** lemon trees , only some of them, the ones which were given fertiliser. This is an example of **defining relative clause**.

In sentence **B** , the relative clause is not essential to the meaning of the sentence, it gives us additional information. In this case we are talking about all lemon trees. This is an example of **non-defining relative clause**.

- There are differences of grammar and punctuation between the two types of clause.

Exercise 1 Say whether the following are **defining** or **non-defining**.

- The majority of complaints are from people who have chosen the wrong sort of holiday.
- We stayed in our usual hotel, which had just been redecorated.
- My mother, who is 60 today, has just come back from Madrid.
- The letter that I've been waiting for has just arrived.

RELATIVE PRONOUNS: WHO, WHOSE, WHOM, WHICH, THAT			
Used for people	subject of the verb (can't be omitted)	object of the verb (can be omitted)	possession (can't be omitted)
	WHO / THAT	WHO / WHOM / THAT	WHOSE
	She is the teacher who/that came to our school last week.	This is the man (who / that) we saw last Monday.	That's the boy whose brother won the prize.
Used for things/animals	WHICH / THAT	WHICH / THAT	WHOSE
	This is the house which / that belongs to my friend.	Here's the bag (which / that) you left on my desk.	That's the bag whose handle is broken.

RELATIVE ADVERBS: WHEN / WHERE / WHY		
TIME	WHEN (= in/on which)	That was the summer (when) it rained everyday.
PLACE	WHERE (= in /on / at / to which)	That's the hotel where we stayed.
REASON	WHY (= for which)	Can you tell me the reason (why) he lied to me?

1 DEFINING RELATIVE CLAUSES

- ♣ Commas are not used to separate the relative clause from the rest of the sentence.
- ♣ **That** is often used instead of **who** or **which**, especially in speech.
Example: The farmer was furious about the cows that passed in front of his house.
- ♣ If the relative pronoun is the object of the clause, it can be omitted.
Compare: That's the bus which goes to the station. (cannot be omitted)
The bus which I caught didn't go to the station.
The bus I caught didn't go to the station.
- ♣ **That** is usually used after superlatives (The biggest, the best, etc.) and also after **all, only, any(thing), every(thing), some(thing), no(thing), none, little, few, much, many**, for example:
 There's something **that** I ought to tell you.
 1976 was the hottest summer **that** we have ever had.
- ♣ **Whose** is the possessive relative pronoun. It can be used for people and things.
For example:
 My neighbour is a man **whose** hobby is playing the drums.
 That's the car **whose** engine blew up.

- ♣ **When and Where to replace preposition + which.** When the antecedent is a noun denoting time or place, **when** and **where** may be used in place of **preposition + which**.

Examples:

The office *where* I work is not far away (where = in/at which)
 The time (*when*) we were together was very happy.
 The house *where* the Clintons live is quite comfortable.
 The house The Clintons live *in* is quite comfortable.
 The house *in which* The Clintons....

- ♣ **Why (reason) :** The reason (**why**) the cat didn't eat was probably that Jane didn't eat either. (*for which*)
 Give one good reason **why** I should trust you.

Exercise 2 : Match the two halves of these sentences and link them with relative pronouns **who, which, that** or **whose** to make a complete sentence.

A

- 1 All the people
- 2 Can you take the suit
- 3 She's the best friend
- 4 The boy
- 5 What's the name of the man
- 6 I've lost the new pen
- 7 Don't tell anybody
- 8 We decided to go to a restaurant
- 9 The man
- 10 The magazine

B

- A sits next to me is always cheating.
- B you lent me has some very good articles in it.
- C we had never been to before.
- D wife works in the library?
- E is hanging in the cupboard to the cleaners?
- F have met him say he's awful.
- G anybody could ever have.
- H car you scratched is walking this way.
- I bought this morning.
- J you met where I am.



When you have finished, check your answers with another student. In which sentences can the relative be omitted?

Exercise 3: Join the pairs of sentences below, using a relative pronoun where necessary. Begin the new sentence with the part which is underlined. (You may need to change **a** to **the** in some cases.) *For example:*

I'm reading a book. It has two pages missing.
The book (that) I'm reading has two pages missing.

- a) We used to live in a house. It's just been sold.
- b) An old lady lives across the road. She's got eight cats.
- c) You were looking for a friend. He's just come in.
- d) My grandmother left me an old chair in her will. It's worth a fortune!
- e) I bought my watch at a local shop. I can't remember its name,
- f) The writer lives in New York. His latest book was published on Tuesday.
- g) A neighbour has been to Sao Paulo. He says he's never seen anything like it.
- h) The student has gone to university. He came top in maths at school.
- i) Several people went to Paris this Spring. None of them complained about the hotel.

2 NON-DEFINING RELATIVE CLAUSES

- Commas are usually used to separate the relative clause from the rest of the sentence.
- That cannot be used instead of who or which.
- Who or which cannot be omitted.

Exercise 4: Give some additional information with a relative clause beginning who, which or whose in the following sentences:

- a) Wimbledon, _____, is in south London.
- b) He's hoping to be chosen for the next Olympic Games, _____
- c) The Prime Minister, _____, will face an election soon.
- d) Every school child has heard of Columbus, _____
- e) Mount Everest _____, is the highest mountain in the world.

Exercise 5: Put commas in the following sentences where necessary. In Which of the sentences could the relative pronoun be omitted?

- a) I've just read his third novel which is the best.
- b) The person who I spoke to yesterday was very rude.
- c) A corkscrew is a device which removes corks from bottles.
- d) They gave their car which was very old to their son.
- e) The book which I recommended to you is out of print.

REVISION

Fill in the appropriate relative, say whether the relative clauses are **essential or not** to the meaning of the main sentence, then add commas where necessary.

- 1. Paul , .. **who**... is a famous actor , went to school with my brother. ___ *not essential* ___
- 2. The pen I left on that table has disappeared. _____
- 3. The woman cleans our flat is very friendly. _____
- 4. David grew up in Canada speaks fluent French. _____
- 5. The man car was stolen has gone to the police station. _____
- 6. Rye my grandmother lives is near the sea. _____
- 7. Roger car has broken down is late for work. _____
- 8. The Acropolis attracts many tourists is in Athens. _____



Join the sentences using **who, when, where, which or whose**.

- 1. She's the girl. She works in the library. ___ She is the girl who works in the library ___
- 2. Corfu is an island. It has many beautiful beaches. _____
- 3. Here's the alarm clock. I bought it yesterday. _____
- 4. I've spoken to John. His house was burgled last Monday. _____
- 5. That's the lady. Her jewellery was stolen. _____
- 6. That is the radio. I won it in the competition. _____
- 7. John is the man. His house was destroyed by the fire. _____
- 8. There is the hospital. I was born there. _____
- 9. That was the summer. I met my wife then. _____
- 10. That is Fiona Webb. She is a famous dancer. _____
- 11. France is the country. The best wine is produced there. _____
- 12. 1945 was the year. The Second World War ended then. _____
- 13. That's the hotel. I stayed there last summer. _____
- 14. August is the month. Most people go on holiday then. _____