

28 Relative clauses 1

A Relative clauses

*Any City expert **who would rather talk than listen** has forgotten what made him an expert in the first place.*
(The Economist, 19.0200)

- Relative clauses are short phrases beginning with words like *who*, *that* and *which* that define or describe people and things. There are two types:
- Defining relative clauses: we use these to identify exactly which person or thing we mean.
The candidate *who we interviewed on Friday* is better than this one.

The relative clause is part of the noun phrase. The information is necessary for the sentence to make sense.

- Non-defining relative clauses: we use these to add extra information about a person or thing.
*Capellas, **whose father was a Greek immigrant who entered the United States after World War II**, returned yesterday to Greece on a business trip.* (International Herald Tribune website)

The information may be interesting, but it is not a necessary part of the sentence. To show this in writing we use commas.

Non-defining clauses are more common in writing. In speech, we often give the same information by just using two short sentences. Compare:

*The salesman, **who was very helpful**, said this model was in stock.* (writing)

'The salesman was very helpful. He said this model was in stock.' (speech)

- Look again at the previous example. Remember that we are just adding extra information about a salesman. If there is more than one salesman and we want to say which one we are talking about, then we use a defining relative clause.
*'The salesman **who I spoke to on the phone yesterday** said this model was in stock, but now you tell me that you don't have any. I've come all the way here to buy it.'*

B Relative pronouns

Defining Relative Clauses:

- The words **who**, **which**, **that**, **whom** and **whose** can begin a relative clause. They are called relative pronouns.
- For people both *who* and *that* are used, but *who* is more common.
*The candidate **who** they chose for the job has a finance background.*
- For things or ideas both *which* and *that* are used, but *that* is more common, especially in speech.
*The products **that** you ordered were sent today.*
*The food sector faces another problem. In order to participate in the EU's single market it will have to conform to the Common Agricultural Policy, **which makes up 40% of all EU regulations.*** (Business Central Europe website)
*The fight for survival of daily business will be won by the organizations **that adapt** most successfully to the new world **that is developing.*** (BusinessWeek website)
- The relative pronoun *whose* shows that something belongs to someone or something.
*I've invited to the meeting everyone **whose work is relevant to this project.***
*The European Union is an organisation **whose policies change quite slowly.***
*He owns 100 per cent of this company, **whose sales hit close to \$3 million in 1998.*** (Asia, Inc. website)
- In formal English it is possible to use **whom** instead of *who* where *who* is the object of the sentence. But in modern English most speakers only use *who*.
*The candidate **who/whom** we chose for the job has an MBA in corporate finance.*

C Leaving out the relative pronoun in a defining relative clause

- We can leave out *who*, *which*, *that* (but not *whose*) in a defining relative clause if they are followed immediately by a noun or pronoun.

The technician (who) Tony spoke to said the network was working fine.

The salad (which/that) I had for my starter was superb.

This is usual in spoken English.

- We must keep the relative pronoun if it is followed immediately by a verb.

The technician who spoke to Tony said the network was working fine.

The salad which/that came with the fish was superb.

D Non-defining relative clauses

- We must keep the relative pronoun in non-defining clauses. We cannot leave it out (it makes no difference whether it is followed by a noun or a verb).

The technician, who my colleagues know well, said the network was working fine.

The technician, who spent over an hour here, said the network was working fine.

The salad, which he'd spent hours preparing, was superb.

The salad, which had avocado in it, was superb.

- That is never used in a non-defining relative clause.

Chile, which is an important market for us, is having some currency problems.

E Relative pronouns and prepositions

- Normally we put prepositions at the end of the relative clause.

a) *The person (who) I got these figures from said they were accurate.*

b) *Unilever is a company (that/which) we know quite a lot about.*

c) *The person (who) I spoke to was called Pam.*

- But in formal English it is possible to put prepositions in front of *whom*, *which* and *whose* (but not *who* or *that*). Compare with the previous examples:

a) *The person from whom I got these figures said they were accurate.* (formal, rare)

b) *Unilever is a company about which we know quite a lot.* (formal, rare)

c) *The person to whom I spoke was called Pam.* (incorrect)

The person who I spoke to... / The person to whom I spoke...

- We do not put another pronoun after the preposition.

(NOT *Unilever is a company that we know quite a lot about it.*)

(*Unilever is a company about which we know quite a lot.*)



"Miss Dugan, will you send someone in here who can distinguish right from wrong?"

28 Practice

Exercise 1 A

Decide whether the words in *italics* are defining or non defining relative clauses. Write D or ND.

- 1 The man *who is in reception* has been waiting for ten minutes. ☒ D
- 2 The food, *which was very nice*, was served at the bar. ☐
- 3 The projector, *which has a new bulb*, is over there. ☐
- 4 The projector *which has a new bulb* is over there. ☐
- 5 The train *which leaves at 8 am* doesn't stop at Bath. ☐
- 6 The train, *which leaves at 8 am*, doesn't stop at Bath. ☐

Exercise 2 B

Complete the sentences with *who*, *whose* or *that*.

- 1 The customer *whose* company I visited is phoning this afternoon.
- 2 The manual they sent explains everything.
- 3 It's difficult to say this fax was sent by.
- 4 The candidates CVs I looked at this morning were all very good.
- 5 I don't remember I spoke to when I called yesterday.
- 6 Your colleague, I met this morning, had a different opinion.
- 7 Toyota is a manufacturer reputation is excellent all over the world.
- 8 The contract you showed me before was different to this one.
- 9 I can't remember I invited to the meeting.
- 10 Do you know Catherine works for?
- 11 The consultant, seems very young, is speaking to Martin Sommer.
- 12 They promoted the manager sales team was most successful.

Exercise 3 C D

Put a bracket around the relative pronoun if you can leave it out. Put a tick at the end if you must keep the relative pronoun.

- 1 The book (that) you lent me about e-commerce is really interesting.
- 2 The company which is our main competitor is Apollo. ✓
- 3 The name which they chose for the new model is Prima.
- 4 The meeting room, which wasn't very large, became hot and stuffy.
- 5 In the end, the sales campaign was the best that we'd ever had.
- 6 These are the people whose names appear on the database.
- 7 The people who attended the presentation found it very useful.
- 8 The supplier who we visited last week had better quality than this one.
- 9 Richard Branson, who started with almost nothing, is a typical entrepreneur.
- 10 Newsweek is the English-language magazine that I read most often.

Exercise 4 E

Rewrite the formal sentence as everyday informal sentences, beginning as shown.

- 1 These are the colleagues with whom I went to the conference.
These are the colleagues I went to the conference with.
- 2 This is the breakthrough for which we have been waiting.
This is the breakthrough we
- 3 That's the hotel at which I stayed.
That's the hotel I
- 4 When I call the accountants, Richard is the person with whom I usually deal.
When I call the accountants, Richard is the person I
- 5 This is the catalogue from which we choose the samples.
This is the catalogue we
- 6 This is the area for which I am responsible.
This is the area I

Exercise 5 B C E

Decide whether each sentence is possible or impossible. Write P or I.

- 1 This is the customer we received the complaint from. ☐
- 2 This is the customer who we received the complaint from. ☐
- 3 This is the customer from whom we received the complaint. ☐
- 4 This is the customer from who we received the complaint. ☐
- 5 This is the product which we're depending on. ☐
- 6 This is the product we're depending on. ☐
- 7 This is the product on whom we're depending. ☐
- 8 This is the product on which we're depending. ☐
- 9 The consultants with who we deal are called AlphaCom. ☐
- 10 The consultants with whom we deal are called AlphaCom. ☐
- 11 The consultants who we deal with are called AlphaCom. ☐
- 12 The consultants we deal with are called AlphaCom. ☐

Exercise 6 A B C D

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Read this newspaper article which includes four relative clauses a–d. Then decide whether each statement below is True or False about each relative clause. Write T or F at the end.

Yesterday, the Federal Reserve made the cut in interest rates (a) *which the markets had been expecting*. The Fed Chairman, (b) *who was back at his desk yesterday after a short trip to Japan*, made the announcement after trading

on Wall Street had closed. The reaction (c) *which will follow on the currency markets* is difficult to predict, as the dollar – (d) *which has been trading at around 0.93 euros* – has had a lot of bad news over the last few days.

- 1 The relative clause identifies a person, event or thing.
- 2 The relative pronoun can be replaced with 'that'.
- 3 You can leave out the relative pronoun.

a	b	c	d
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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29 Relative clauses 2

The company that made the DAX index jump was Deutsche Telekom. Traders said that big shareholders who received hundreds of millions of shares as part of Telekom's purchase of US-based VoiceStream intended to hold on to their Telekom shares.

(Frankfurter Allgemeine website)

A Combining sentences

- Look at this example of two short separate sentences.
I'm taking a flight. It goes via Frankfurt.
We can combine the sentences using a relative clause. There are two ways, but the meanings are the same.
a) *I'm taking a flight that goes via Frankfurt.*
OR
b) *The flight (that) I'm taking goes via Frankfurt.*
- Note that articles often change when sentences are combined.
a) has **a** flight, like the original short sentence, because the flight is mentioned for the first time and there are several of them.
b) has **the** flight because there is only one in the speaker's mind.
- Remember that we often leave out the relative pronoun (*that*) in spoken English in cases like this.
- When we combine sentences we do not add another pronoun.
a) NOT *I'm taking a flight that it goes via Frankfurt.*
b) NOT *The flight that I'm taking it goes via Frankfurt.*

B Use of **what** (Nominal Relative Pronoun)

- We can use the nominal pronoun **what** to mean *the thing(s) that*.
I didn't understand what she said. (= the things that she said)
What we need is a better marketing strategy. (= the thing that we need is)
Having a few huge corporations control our outlets of expression could lead to less aggressive news coverage and a more muted marketplace of ideas. Conglomeration affects what the media companies do and, in turn, what you read, watch, and hear. (Brillcontent website)

C Use of **where**, **when** and **why**

- We can use the relative adverbs **where**, **when** and **why** with their normal meanings to identify which thing we are talking about. **This only works in informal English!**
Analysts said it was difficult to understand the reason why the European Central Bank had cut rates. (Observer website)
- We can leave out **when** or **why**, or use **that**.
Do you remember the day (when) I started working here?
Do you remember the day that I started working here?
- We must keep **where**, except when there is **a preposition** at the end of the clause. In this case we leave it out or use **that**.
The hotel where I stayed was quite cheap.
The hotel (that) I stayed in was quite cheap.

D Relative clauses with a participle (-ing, -ed)

- The relative clause can have a continuous verb form (with an *-ing* ending) or a passive verb form (with an *-ed* ending).

The people **who are making the real decisions** are all at Head Office.

The products **that were attracting most interest** were the smaller, lighter models.

Passengers **who are seated in rows J-P** can now board the aircraft.

Food **which is sold in supermarkets** needs a relatively long shelf-life.

- In these cases we can simplify the sentence by leaving out both the relative pronoun and the verb *be*. These are known as **Participle Clauses**.

The people **making the real decisions** are all at Head Office.

The products **attracting most interest** were the smaller, lighter models.

Passengers **seated in rows J-P** can now board the aircraft.

Food **sold in supermarkets** needs a relatively long shelf-life.

Asda, **now owned by Wal-Mart**, is keen to increase the space in its stores devoted to household goods, electricals and entertainment products. (Independent website)



"David, as head of our acquisitions division, your annual bonus is 10 million dollars, from which we deduct 2 million for the coffee fund."

29 Practice

Exercise 1 A

Combine each pair of sentences by including the word given in brackets.

- 1 Last year we introduced a new line. It's aimed at the youth market. (that)
The new line that we introduced last year is aimed at the youth market.
- 2 I'd like you to meet a colleague. He could be a useful contact for you. (who)
I'd like you to meet a colleague
.....
- 3 A candidate's CV is on your desk. She deserves an interview. (whose)
The candidate deserves an interview.
- 4 A visitor is coming next week. She's from our Paris office. (who)
The visitor is from our Paris office.
- 5 Tom took me to a restaurant. It was called 'Noodle Heaven'. (that)
The restaurant was called 'Noodle Heaven'.
- 6 I heard a man's presentation. He was an investment banker. (whose)
The man was an investment banker.
- 7 Here is a mobile phone. I was telling you about it. (that)
Here is the mobile phone
.....
- 8 Over there is a site. They're going to build a new factory. (where)
The site is over there.

Exercise 2 A

If the sentence is correct put a tick (✓) at the end. If the sentence has a word which should not be there, write the incorrect word at the end.

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| 1 The woman who I asked didn't know the way. | ✓ |
| 2 The firm whose their stand was at the back had very few visitors. | <u>their</u> |
| 3 That was the longest meeting I've ever been in. | |
| 4 The train which it goes to Brussels leaves from here. | |
| 5 The products which sell best they are those with nice packaging. | |
| 6 This model, which it was launched last year, is selling very well. | |
| 7 Everyone that I spoke to advised me to try again. | |
| 8 The company where I used to work it was called Interlink. | |

Exercise 3 B C unit 28

Underline the correct words. This exercise includes some revision of unit 28.

- 1 The flight which/who I'm taking leaves from Terminal 2.
- 2 She's from the company which/whose products we distribute.
- 3 Everyone who/which was at the meeting will receive a copy of the minutes.
- 4 Message. To whom/who it may concern: please do not leave dirty coffee cups here.
- 5 There were some interesting ideas at the meeting that/what I went to.
- 6 It's not the first time that/what they've done this.
- 7 That/What I like best about my job is the contact with people.
- 8 Has anybody seen the folder what/that I left on this desk?
- 9 The room where/that I work has very little natural light.
- 10 The room where/that I work in has very little natural light.

Exercise 4 B D

Complete the sentences with *what*, *which* or *who*, or tick (✓) the space if the sentence is already correct.

- 1 There's a lot of noise from the builders working next door.
- 2 Mike doesn't really know what he wants in his career.
- 3 I was talking to a man going to the same conference as us.
- 4 I was talking to a man is going to the same conference as us.
- 5 I asked her she was thinking.
- 6 This is a new drug was developed at our Cambridge laboratories.
- 7 This is a new drug developed at our Cambridge laboratories.
- 8 This drug, was developed at our Cambridge laboratories, is fantastic.
- 9 This drug, developed at our Cambridge laboratories, is fantastic.
- 10 we need now is better brand recognition.
- 11 The 'assets' include everything owned by the company.
- 12 I didn't really understand he was talking about.

Exercise 5 A



35 Complete the article by writing relative clauses based on the notes below. Begin with either *who* or *which*.

The Battle for

GUCCI

In 1999 Bernard Arnault's LVMH fought a battle to take over Gucci, (1) which was run by Domenico De Sole. De Sole received news that LVMH, (2), had bought 5% of its shares. This was going to be the battle (3) De Sole gathered together a team of people (4) It included American lawyer Allan Tuttle and Bob Singer, (5) There were two options: either negotiate

with Arnault and sell the business, or defend Gucci by finding a friendly 'white knight' to rescue them. They decided to fight. The models at the Gucci men's show in January 1999 had white faces and teeth like Dracula, (6) Meanwhile Arnault had accumulated shares (7) The

white knight (8) arrived in the form of Francois Pinault, (9) PPR was very successful in Europe, but Pinault wanted a chance to build a global group. Pinault agreed to invest US\$3 billion, (10)

In return Pinault's group gained representatives on a new strategic committee, but he agreed to leave control of the company with De Sole and the senior Gucci team. ■

- 1 LVMH fought a battle with Gucci. Gucci was run by Domenico De Sole.
- 2 LVMH had bought 5% of Gucci's shares. LVMH was the largest luxury goods company in the world.
- 3 This was going to be a battle. It would decide the future of the industry.
- 4 De Sole gathered together a team of people. He could trust them.
- 5 Bob Singer was in the team. Bob Singer was the chief financial officer.
- 6 The models looked like Dracula. This was meant to be a message for Arnault.
- 7 Arnault accumulated shares. They represented 34% of Gucci's total stock.
- 8 A white knight arrived. Gucci had been looking for one.
- 9 Francois Pinault was the white knight. He was the head of a non-food retail group called PPR.
- 10 Pinault invested US\$3 billion. This was a 42% share in Gucci.