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Structuring a sentence: relative clauses

GRAMMAR

LEVEL
Advanced

NUMBER
C1_1031G_EN

LANGUAGE
English



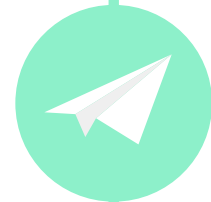


Goals

- Can recognise defining and non-defining relative clauses and explain the difference between the two.
- Can successfully use a relative clause to introduce additional information about a topic.



Relative clauses, **which** often cause problems for English learners, can be quite tricky. However, if you have a teacher **who** can help you, they can be understood reasonably easily.





Relative clauses

Relative clauses add **additional information** to a sentence. Sometimes the information is **essential** to the sentence, and sometimes it is simply extra information to add **interest**.



The Grand Canyon, **which is in Arizona**, is one of the most beautiful places on Earth. It is where I proposed to my wife.



Relative pronouns

- **Relative pronouns** are words we find in **relative clauses**. They **refer** to a **noun** earlier in the sentence.
- When we are speaking we often use **that** instead of **who**, **which** or **whom**.
- We rarely use **whom** as it is old fashioned. We usually use **who** or **that**.

	Subject	Object	Possessive
Person	who/that	who/that/whom	whose
Thing	which/that	which/that	whose
Place	where		
Time	when		
Reason	why		



Defining relative clauses

- We use **defining relative clauses** to give **essential** information about a noun in the sentence.
- The meaning of the sentence would change significantly without the **defining relative clause**, and the sentence may not make sense without it.
- Look at the examples of **defining relative clauses** below.

- They are visiting the girl **who was in hospital yesterday**.
- The car **which the bank robbers escaped in** was red.
- London is **where I want to live**.
- The table **which I bought** last week is broken.
- Saturday is the day **when we'll** throw Rita's birthday party.
- That teacher is the reason **why I failed** my exam.
- She's the woman **to whom I told** all of my secrets.



Subject or object?

- If the **relative pronoun** is **followed by a verb**, the **relative pronoun** is a **subject pronoun**.
- If the **relative pronoun** is **not followed by a verb**, the **relative pronoun** is an **object pronoun**.

They're the people who are buying our house.	The people are buying the house. They is the subject.
They're the people that she wanted to talk to.	She wanted to talk to the people. She is the subject.
He's the man who told me to go home.	The man told me to go home. He is the subject.
He's the man whom I saw yesterday.	I saw the man yesterday. I is the subject.



Be careful!



- The **relative pronoun** is the **subject** or **object** of the **sentence**.
- **Do not repeat** the subject or object.

Correct	Incorrect
She's the lady who gave me a glass of water.	She's the lady who she gave me a glass of water.
The flat that we rented in Sydney was furnished.	The flat that we rented it in Sydney was furnished.



Fill in the gaps

Fill in the gaps with the correct relative pronoun. More than one answer might be correct.

Can you remember...

1. A day _____ you made a big decision?
2. A person _____ had a big influence on you as a child?
3. A place _____ you learnt something very important?
4. A reason _____ you have your current job?
5. A reason _____ you didn't choose a different career?
6. A time _____ you had to choose between two important things?
7. A time _____ you didn't worry about the future?
8. A place _____ you met someone very important to you?

Check your answers on the next slide and then answer the questions with your teacher.



Answer the questions

Can you remember...

1. A day when you made a big decision?
2. A person who had a big influence on you as a child?
3. A place where you learnt something very important?
4. A reason why you have your current job?
5. A reason why you didn't choose a different career?
6. A time when you had to choose between two important things?
7. A time when you didn't worry about the future?
8. A place where you met someone very important to you?





Make the two sentences into one using a relative clause

1. We went to a place. It is called Loch Ness.



The place where we went is called Loch Ness.

2. The man stole my purse. He went to prison.



3. The airport is a place. You must show ID there.



4. A mobile phone is a device. You can use it to call people.



5. Spain is a place. A lot of people go on holiday there.





Non-defining relative clauses

- We use **non-defining relative clauses** to give **non-essential information** about a noun in the sentence.
- The meaning of the sentence would not change significantly without the **non-defining relative clause**, and the sentence will make sense without it.
- Look at the examples of **non-defining relative clauses** below.

- JK Rowling, **who was born in Scotland**, wrote Harry Potter.
- England, **which is a small country**, is in the north of Europe.
- My brother, **who is a doctor**, works in London.
- The students, **who speak French**, are going to the party.



Non-defining relative clauses



- **Non-defining relative clauses** always use **commas** to separate the clause from the rest of the sentence.
- We **do not use that** in a **non-defining relative clause**.



The strawberries, **which** were grown in my grandma's garden, were delicious.



Defining and non-defining relative clauses

- Look at these examples again to better understand the difference between **defining** and **non-defining relative clauses**.
- Pay close attention to the **commas** (or lack thereof) in the sentence.

My brother who is a doctor works in London.	I have more than one brother. I need to identify which brother I am talking about.
My brother, who is a doctor , works in London.	I have only one brother.
The students who speak French are going to the party.	Only the students who speak French are going.
The students, who speak French , are going to the party.	All the students are going, and they all speak French.



Put each pair of sentences together using a non-defining relative clause.

1. My mother is 87. She lives in New Zealand.



My mother, who lives in New Zealand, is 87. **or:**
My mother, who is 87, lives in New Zealand.

2. My son is 2. He can't speak yet.



3. The apples were red. They were delicious.



4. Canberra is a new city. It is the capital of Australia.



5. 'Daks' is an Australian word. It means trousers.





Use the words to make sentences with non-defining relative clauses

A

the Amazon

longest

South America

river

B

the Eiffel Tower

1889

France

Paris

C

Hawaii

president

Barack Obama

USA

D

Thailand

8 million people

capital

Bangkok



Defining or non-defining relative clauses?

Are these defining or non-defining relative clauses?

1. My sister, who lives in Canada, has 7 dogs.
2. Claire is the girl who lives in New Zealand.
3. Iceland, where we spent our last holiday, is a very beautiful country.
4. Yesterday I met a man whose mother works in Beijing.
5. My 18th birthday was the day when I left for college.
6. Switzerland, which is a country with huge mountains, is a nice place for a holiday.
7. Marie was the person to whom I gave the list.
8. Her car, which was very old, broke down just 10 kilometres from her house.



Omitting the relative pronoun

- The relative pronoun **can be omitted** when it is the **object** of the clause. When the relative pronoun is the **subject** of the clause, it **cannot be omitted**.
- You can usually tell when a relative pronoun is the **object** of the clause because it is **followed** by another **subject + verb**.
- The relative pronoun can **never be omitted** in **non-defining relative clauses**.

They're the people who she wanted to talk to.	They're the people she wanted to talk to.
He's the man who I saw yesterday.	He's the man I saw yesterday.
The woman that the man loved was living in New York.	The woman the man loved was living in New York.



Reduced relative clauses

- We can **reduce** the relative clause when we have the verb **to be** after the relative pronoun.
- The verb **to be** must be followed by a **present participle** or a **past participle**.
- We can **omit** the **relative pronoun** and the verb **to be**.
- Look at the examples below.

Full relative clause	→	Reduced relative clause
The man who is in the house is my father.		The man in the house is my father.
The man who is swimming in the lake is my father.		The man swimming in the lake is my father.
I just read a book which was written by Charlotte Bronte.		I just read a book written by Charlotte Bronte.
The bag which is sitting on the table is Jane's.		The bag sitting on the table is Jane's.



Omit the relative pronoun

Can you omit the relative pronoun in these sentences? Explain your answer for each.

1. This is the jumper that I bought in the winter sales.
2. She is the woman who I thought I would marry.
3. The man who stole my purse went to prison.
4. They're the bags which I wanted to buy before I realised they were fake.
5. That's the place where I wanted to go to on holiday.
6. London is where I want to live.
7. He's the man whom I was talking to right before the robbery happened.
8. They're the people that are buying our house.
9. My final year of university was a time when I had to choose between two important things.
10. The students who speak French are going to the party.



Reduced relative clauses

Can you reduce these relative clauses?

1. The telephone which is on the desk is broken.
2. Belgium is a country which makes excellent chocolate.
3. I watched a film that was directed by Steven Spielberg last night.
4. James is the person who is responsible for the project, and he did the presentation.
5. London is a city where I would love to live.
6. The woman who is sitting on my sofa just told me the most horrifying secret.





Fill in the gaps

Fill in the gaps with the correct relative pronoun. Can you omit the pronoun or reduce the clause?

1. Tinny, _____ is an Australian word, means a can of beer.
2. Knackered is a British word _____ means stupid.
3. Hard yakka, _____ comes from the USA, means hard work.
4. In Australia, the slang word _____ is used to mean afternoon is 'arvo'.
5. People _____ use the term 'goof off' are probably from South Africa.
6. In Britain, 'chuffed' is a slang word _____ is used to say you are very happy.
7. 'Jock', _____ is a word used in New Zealand, means a sportsman.
8. Jandals is a word _____ means flip flops in New Zealand.

Decide which of the sentences are *true* and which are *false*.



Defining slang words

Do you know these slang words? Try to define them for your teacher. If you don't know what they mean, make it up!

dunny

YOLO

minted

sunnies



Reflect on the lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!





Answer key

Exercise p. 9

1. when, 2. who/that, 3. where, 4. why, 5. why, 6. when, 7. when, 8. where

Exercise p. 11

2. The man who stole my purse went to prison. 3. The airport is a place where you must show ID. 4. A mobile phone is a device which you can use to call people. 5. Spain is a place where a lot of people go on holiday.

Exercise p. 15

2. My son, who is 2, can't speak yet. **or** My son, who can't speak yet, is 2. 3. The apples, which were red, were delicious. **or** The apples, which were delicious, were red. 4. Canberra, which is the capital of Australia, is a new city. **or** Canberra, which is a new city, is the capital of Australia. 5. 'Daks', which is an Australian word, means trousers.

Exercise p. 17

1. ND, 2. D, 3. ND, 4. D, 5. D, 6. ND, 7. D, 8. ND

Exercise p. 20

1. Yes, 2. Yes, 3. No, 4. Yes, 5. Yes, 6. No, 7. Yes, 8. Yes, 9. Yes, 10. No

Exercise p. 21

1. Yes: telephone on, 2. No, 3. Yes: film directed, 4. Yes: person responsible, 5. No, 6. Yes: woman sitting



Answer key

Exercise p. 22

1. Which; true

2. which/that; false, it means very tired

3. which; false, it is Australian

4. - ; true

5. who; false, they are probably from the USA

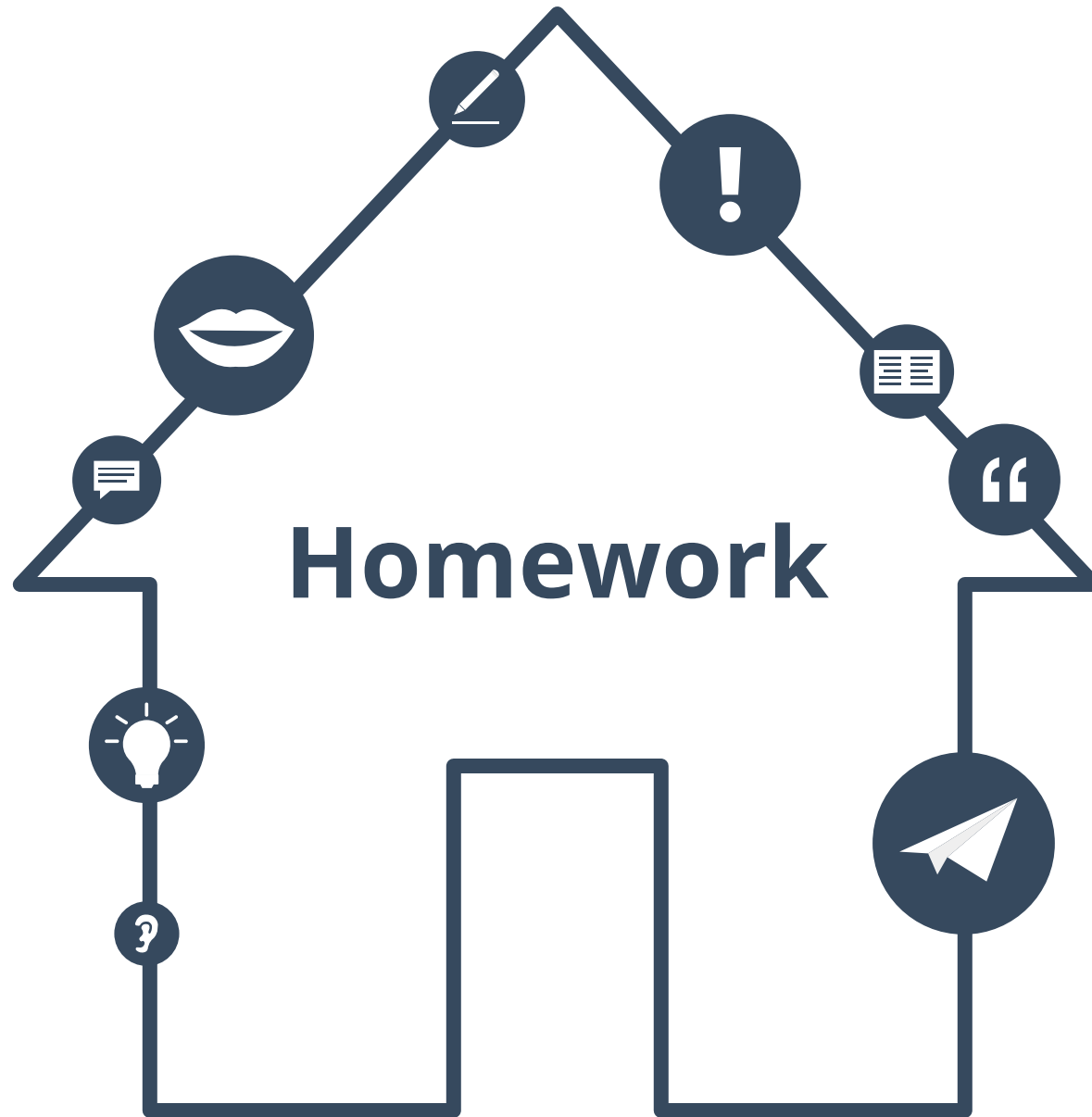
6. which/that; true

7. which/that; true

8. that; true

Exercise p. 23

1. Dunny is Australia for toilet. 2. YOLO is originally from the USA and it means You Only Live Once. 3. Minted is British for rich. 4. Sunnies is used in Australia and New Zealand for sunglasses.





Use relative clauses to make the two sentences into one

1. My grandfather is 102. He rollerblades every day.



My grandfather, who is 102, rollerblades every day.

2. Italy is a country. It is famous for pasta.



3. Alexander Graham Bell was a man. He invented the telephone.



4. Norway is very beautiful. It is in Scandinavia.



5. The man was arrested. He has now been released.



6. My Uncle John is a journalist. He lives in Hungary.



7. That's the girl. Her brother is in your class.



8. Victoria is a state in Australia. It is named after Queen Victoria.





Homework answer key

2. Italy is a country which is famous for pasta. 3. Alexander Graham Bell was the man who invented the telephone. 4. Norway, which is in Scandinavia, is very beautiful. 5. The man who was arrested has now been released. 6. My Uncle John, who is a journalist, lives in Hungary. 7. That's the girl whose brother is in your class. 8. Victoria, which is a state in Australia, was named after Queen Victoria.



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