

● Relative clauses / participles

Relative clauses

Relative clauses give us extra information about something/someone or identify which particular thing/person we are talking about. They are often introduced by the following words.

Use	Example
<i>which</i> (for things and animals)	<i>Did you see the film which was on TV last night?</i>
<i>who</i> (for people, and animals when we want to give them a personality)	<i>Tom Davies, who is appearing in concert in Reading this week, is with me in the studio.</i>
<i>when</i> (for times)	<i>Do you remember the day when we met?</i>
<i>where</i> (for places)	<i>This is the place where they filmed Citizen Kane.</i>
<i>why</i> (for reasons)	<i>That's the reason why he's so popular.</i>
<i>whom</i> (for people as the object of the relative clause)	<i>Is that the man whom we saw at the cinema yesterday?</i>
<i>whose</i> (for possession)	<i>My next guest on the show is John Travolta, whose career goes back to the early seventies.</i>

Watch out!

- When the relative pronoun (*who*, *which*, etc) is the subject of the relative clause, you do **not** need another subject.
 - ✓ *I admire Jude Law, **who** always works hard on his films.*
 - ✗ *I admire Jude Law, **who he** always works hard on his films.*
- *Whom* is quite formal. It is natural in informal English to use *who* instead of *whom*, even when it is the object of the relative clause. After a preposition, however, we always use *whom*. Informally, we usually put the preposition at the end of the clause and use *who*.
 - ✓ *Is that the man **who** we saw at the cinema yesterday?*
 - ✓ *Charlie Chaplin was a comic genius **to whom** all comedians owe a great deal.*
 - ✓ *Charlie Chaplin was a comic genius **who** all comedians owe a great deal **to**.*
- *Where* can be replaced by a preposition + *which*. Less formally, we can put the preposition at the end of the clause.
 - ✓ *The theatre **where** / **in which** I first acted is somewhere around here.*
 - ✓ *The theatre **which** I first acted **in** is somewhere around here.*
- We can do the same thing with *when*.
 - ✓ *Do you know the year **when** / **in which** the first western was made?*
 - ✓ *Do you know the year **which** the first western was made **in**?*

Non-defining relative clauses

Non-defining relative clauses simply give us more information about something/someone. The sentence makes complete sense without the relative clause.

Use	Example
To give extra information about something/someone	<i>Ray Watson, who starred in Bandits, is considering making a film based on the life of Einstein.</i>

Watch out!

- Non-defining relative clauses are separated from the rest of the sentence by commas.
 - ✓ *Megamonsters, **which** was filmed in New York, is a very disappointing film.*
- We cannot leave out the word which introduces the relative clause and we cannot use the word *that* instead.
 - ✗ *Megamonsters, **was** filmed in New York, is a very disappointing film.*
 - ✗ *Megamonsters, **that** was filmed in New York, is a very disappointing film.*
- *Which* can refer back to the whole of the sentence.
 - ✓ *We finally got tickets for the concert, **which** was very lucky.*
(It doesn't mean the concert was lucky. It means getting tickets for the concert was lucky.)