

Relative clauses

There are two types of relative clauses:

1. Defining relative clauses
2. Non-defining relative clauses

DEFINING RELATIVE CLAUSES

*The Terra and Aqua satellites carry instruments called spectroradiometers **which** detect the infrared radiation, that is, the heat, radiating from the Earth's surface.*

These describe the preceding noun in such a way to distinguish it from other nouns of the same class. A clause of this kind is essential to clear understanding of the noun.

	Subject	Object
For people	Who	Who/Whom
	That	That
For things	Which	Which
	That	That

NON-DEFINING RELATIVE CLAUSES

Non-defining relative clauses are placed after nouns which are definite already. They do not therefore define the noun. But merely add something to it by giving some more information about it. They are not essential in the sentence and can be omitted without causing confusion. They are separated from their noun by commas. The pronoun can never be omitted in a non-defining relative clause.

*Some might say "Death Valley," **which** isn't a bad guess, as the 56.7°Celsius temperature observed 100 years ago on July 10, 1913-- at aptly named Furnace Creek -- remains, according to official weather statistics, the highest temperature ever recorded.*

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For people	Who	Who/Whom
For things	Which	Which