Defining Relative Clauses

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Language Center

Defining Relative Clauses

I live with someone **who** works in fashion.

He's studying English at a school **that** offers online courses.

Our flat, **which** is quite expensive, has 3 bedrooms.

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In this lesson, we will learn more about **relative clauses** and practise using **relative pronouns** to describe people and things.

That's my friend **who** has just come back from a trip to Germany.

- A **defining relative clause** gives **necessary information** about **someone** or **something**.
- We use a **relative pronoun** to replace the other **pronoun**.

Main clause	Defining clause
I live with a guy.	**He** works in fashion.
he → who	
I live with a guy **who** works in fashion.	

The plum tree is over there. It is in bloom.

it → that

The plum tree that is in bloom is over there.

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- The most common **relative pronouns** are: ***who***, ***which*** and ***that***.
- ***Who*** is for **people** and sometimes **animals**.
- ***Which*** is for **animals** and **things**, but **not** people.
- ***That*** is for **animals** and **things.** We can also use ***that*** for **people**, but ***who*** is more common.

Repeat the sentences.

Main clause	Relative pronoun + clause
There is a girl at work	**who** is from Mexico.
He is going to the meeting,	**which** is in the conference room.
I met an old friend last week	**who** won a prestigious book prize.
It belongs to the boy in the red shirt	**who** was late for school two times in a row.
My nursery is preparing for Easter,	**which** is a lovely, quiet time of year.

Add *who*, *that* or *which* to complete the sentences.

1. I know somebody _____ can help you with that.

2. Where is the report _____ I left on the table?

3. A freelancer is a person _____ works for themselves.

4. Is there a bus _____ will take me to the city centre?

5. The computer _____ I was using has stopped working.

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Use relative pronouns to re-write the sentences in each box as one sentence

1. The customer complained. He wasn't very happy.

→ The customer **who** complained wasn't very happy.

2. The CEO gave a speech. It was interesting and entertaining.

→ _____

_____

3. Maria solved the problem. It was worrying her.

4. I arrived early for my flight. It left at 9pm.

5. We hired a new receptionist. They can speak English and German.

Using *who*, *which* or *that*, write five sentences that include a defining relative clause.

For example: That is the man *who* I saw at the football game yesterday.



Repeat the sentences.

That is the girl that baked the cake.

The team that lost is sitting over there.

The teacher that taught us was very kind.

The old dog that once lived there is now gone.

The rivers that meet at this point are already salty.

Prepositions and Relative Pronoun

- ***Which*** and ***who*** are often used the **prepositions *at*, *from*, *out of*, *in*** and ***about***.
- They can either come **before** or **at the end of the relative clause**.
- If the **preposition comes before** the relative pronoun, it is **formal**.
- If the **preposition** comes **at the end of the relative clause**, it is **informal**.

Repeat the sentences.

That's the lake which I nearly drowned in.

That's the lake in which I nearly drowned.

This is the book which I was telling you about.

This is the book about which I was telling you.

- **Prepositions** that are used with ***that*** can only come **at the end** of the **relative clause**.

This is the **book** that I was telling you **about**.

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Transform the sentences by changing the second one into a relative clause using a relative pronoun and the preposition.

1. That's the aeroplane. We travelled **on** it → That's the aeroplane that we travelled **on**.

2. That's the type of hobby. I know nothing **about** it. → _____

_____

Transform the sentences by changing the second one into a relative clause using a relative pronoun and the preposition.

3. Here is the address. You should write **to** this address.

→ _____
_____

4. I couldn't recognise the street. He lived **in** it.

→ _____
_____

5. I found the catalogue. He had been looking **for** it.

→ _____
_____

Using these verbs and prepositions, construct two sentences using a relative pronoun.



Transform the sentences in the left-hand column to sentences that use *that* or *which*. Don't forget to use a preposition where needed.

The place **where** I work is always busy.	The place **that** I work **at** is always busy.
The café where I met my wife has closed down.	_____

Transform the sentences in the left-hand column to sentences that use *that* or *which*. Don't forget to use a preposition where needed.

The town where I grew up is now a city.	_____
That time when we met at the Eiffel tower was fantastic.	_____
I will never forget the time when we missed the last train home.	_____

6 Choose the correct word in the sentences.

1 Climates affect the people *who* / *that* / *whose* inhabit the region.
2 Climates affect the plants and animals *where* / *who* / *that* live there.
3 Areas *who* / *whose* / *that* have a tundra climate include Russia and North America.
4 Areas *that* / *when* / *where* there is less than twenty-five centimeters of rain each year have desert climates.
5 The months *who* / *when* / *whose* heavy rain falls follow months of dry weather.

7 Complete the sentences with *who*, *whose*, *when*, *where*, or *that*. More than one answer might be possible.

1 An iceberg is a huge piece of ice ___that___ floats in the ocean.
2 The Equator is an imaginary line _____ goes around the Earth.
3 A judge is someone _____ makes important decisions.
4 He's the man _____ daughter I met in Argentina.
5 An art gallery is a place _____ paintings are hung.
6 Summer is the time of year _____ we go on vacation.

SPEAKING

8 Work in pairs, Student A and Student B. Give your partner definitions of the words in your list using defining relative clauses. Your partner guesses the word.

A: This is a country that is located in North America.
B: Is it Canada?
A: Yes, it is!

Student A	Student B
Canada	South Korea
supermarket	pharmacy
stapler	hole punch
cabin crew	builder
1990	2005

Workbook Page W70 Part 2

2 Join the sentence parts with relative pronouns from the box. Then write the complete sentences.

who where ~~where~~ why when whose that

1 I've been to a country	a daughter is in my class.
2 Where's the book	b polar bears live.
3 That's the man	c Tim lent to me?
4 July is the month	d most people go on vacation.
5 The Arctic is the place	e carried my bag yesterday.
6 She never explained	f there's a monsoon climate.
7 That's the man	g our dinner was late.

Workbook Page W70 Part 3

3 Join the sentences with a relative pronoun.

1 This is the book. My teacher wants me to read it.

This is the book that my teacher wants me to read.

2 That's the boy. His mother is a teacher.

3 That's the elementary school. I spent five years there.

4 Ellen's the girl. She always gets the highest grades.

5 This is the pen. I always use it to take tests.

6 Is that the store? You bought your book there.

4 Complete the sentences with your own ideas. Work in pairs and compare your sentences.

1 Miss Taylor is the teacher who teaches us English.

2 _____ is a subject _____.

3 _____ is a person _____.

4 _____ is a country _____.

5 _____ is the city _____.

6 _____ is a sport _____.

7 _____ was the year _____.

8 _____ is the day _____.

Homework

Prepare a presentation and describe yourself and your family. Use relative clauses to help you describe different people or things in your description.