

Name (in Romaji):	→
Student Number:	→
Class Day + Period (examples: Monday 2, Friday 3):	→

RELATIVE CLAUSES

Much like the prepositional phrases, relative clauses provide the reader or the listener with extra information. This information can be used to either:

- (1) define something, or
- (2) provide unnecessary, but interesting, additional information

Relative clauses can be introduced by words like *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *which*, *that*, *where*, or *when*.

Why are relative clauses important? In the case of being used to define something (called a *defining relative clause*), there would be confusion if the relative clause were not there.

For example: • The woman who lives in apartment 5A won the lottery.

The defining relative clause is *who lives in apartment 5A*. It defines who the woman is (because there are many women in the world!). Without this relative clause, the sentence would be:

• The woman won the lottery.

Which woman is the speaker talking about? Who is she? We do not know because the sentence does not provide that information (and there is no other information provided to give us a clue). This sentence is therefore confusing, especially because of the use the article *the* before *woman*. *The* is a definite article and is used if the speaker assumes the listener knows who or what is being talked about. To suddenly say “The woman won the lottery” would be unclear to anybody. More information is needed. The speaker needs to define who is being talked about.



In the case of providing unnecessary, but important, information (called ***non-defining relative clauses***), what is provided to the reader or listener is not used to define anything and is therefore not crucial to the sentence.

For example: • My daughter, who is six years old, likes to climb trees.

The fact that my daughter is six years old is not important to understand the meaning of the sentence:

• My daughter likes to climb trees.

In non-defining relative clauses like the one above, punctuation is important. If the clause occurs in the middle of a sentence, place a comma before the relative pronoun and at the end of the clause. If the clause occurs at the end of a sentence, place a comma before the relative pronoun. And what about defining relative clauses? There are NO COMMAS used with defining relative clauses.

Words used to begin defining relative clauses:

	Person	Object
Subject	who that	which that
Object	that who whom NULL	which that NULL
Possessive	whose	whose of which

For example: • The man who (that) died was a collector of old coins.

In general, ***who*** and ***which*** are more common in written English while ***that*** is more often found in speech.

Some more examples:

- That's the man (that, who, whom, NULL) I met at the conference last year.
- That's the car (that, which, NULL) I will buy next month.

Defining relative clauses can have possessive relative pronouns.

For example: • She's the woman whose house was robbed.



Words used to begin non-defining relative clauses:

	Person	Object
Subject	who	which
Object	who whom	which
Possessive	whose	whose of which

Examples of relative pronouns used as the subject in non-defining relative clauses:

- Elvis Presley, who used to be a truck driver, became famous for his music.
- John Lennon, whose music inspired millions of people, was often called the leader of the Beatles.

Examples of relative pronouns used as the object in non-defining relative clauses:

- For dinner I ate some calamari, which is a delicacy in many countries.
- I met Peirce Brosnan, who is famous for playing the British spy James Bond, at an actor's party in Austin, Texas.

Example of a relative pronoun used as a possessive in a non-defining relative clause:

- Yoshiko, whose last name I can't remember, traveled to Tibet last year.

After words depicting numbers such as **many**, **most**, **neither**, and **some**, use **of** before **whom** and **which** (in non-defining relative clauses). For example:

- Many of the students attending this university, most of whom have traveled abroad before, can speak at least three languages.

