

The Relative Clause

Definition: a relative clause is a dependent clause. It adds extra information or necessary information about one of the nouns in the main clause. It goes immediately after the noun it is related to. The relative pronouns “**who, whose, which, that**” introduce it.

1) The relative pronoun as subject of a relative clause.

E.g. A man is rich. He may spend his money foolishly.

The man **who is rich** may spend his money foolishly.

Note: ‘*That*’ is a possible alternative after *all, everyone, everybody, no one, nobody and those*.

E.g. Nobody **who/ that** knew him liked him.

2) The relative pronoun as object of a relative clause.

E.g. There is the doctor. I met him yesterday.

There is the doctor **whom/ who/ that I met yesterday**.

Or: There is the doctor I met yesterday. (Relative pronoun omitted when used as object).

3) Whose: is the possessive determiner form of “who”. It usually refers to a person or people .It replaces his, her, and their or a possessive case (s).

E.g. The film is about a spy **whose wife betrays him**.

(Relative clause- possessive)

Functions of relative clause:

1) **Defining/ Restrictive clause:** it introduces *information indispensable* for defining the noun it is related to. It limits/ restricts the noun it modifies.

E.g. “The house has just been sold” “Which house are you talking about?”

The house **that/ which** I showed you last week.

2) **Non-defining/ non-restrictive clause:** it adds extra/ *additional information*, but that can be useful. The omission of this information doesn’t affect the meaning of the sentence.

E.g. Mrs. Porter's house has just been sold. It has been for sale for two years.
Mrs. Porter's house, **which has been for sale for two years,** has just been sold.
Notice the use of **comas (,)** when dealing with non- defining relative clauses.

Sentence relative clause:

It refers back to the whole clause or sentence, not just to one noun. It always goes at the end of the clause or sentence.

E.g. Tina admires the Prime Minister. And this surprises me.
Tina admires the Prime Minister, **which surprises me.**

Relative pronouns used in relative clauses

	Subject	Object	Possessive
For persons	who that	whom/who that	whose
For things	which that	which that	whose/ of which

Note: do not use “that” at the beginning of a non- defining clause.