

Which relative pronoun should I use?

1 Tick the correct sentence in each pair.

- 1 a You should do that what you think is right.
b You should do what you think is right.
- 2 a There are several factors that are important in achieving happiness.
b There are several factors are important in achieving happiness.

Relative pronouns (*that*, *who*, etc.) are used to connect two separate clauses:

clause 1 relative pronoun clause 2

There are several factors / that / are important in achieving happiness.

When information is essential to the sentence and cannot be left out, we use:

- *that* to refer to things or people: *The chart that is on page 10 shows...*
- *who* to refer to people: *The number of women who were enrolled...*
- *what* to refer to *the thing that* or *the things that*: *The government should show us what must be done.* (= the thing(s) that must be done)

★ Note that you should only use one relative pronoun (not *The government must show us that what needs to be done*).

The relative pronoun can be left out if it refers to the object of a verb, but not if it refers to the subject of a verb. Compare:

The students that I teach all come from overseas countries. *students* is the object of the verb *teach*, so the relative pronoun *that* can be left out: *The students I teach all come from...*

The students who are studying EAP should see me today. *students* is the subject of the verb *are studying*, so the relative pronoun *who* cannot be left out (not *The students are studying EAP should see me today*).

2 Correct the mistake below.

I need to find someone
can play the piano for our
assembly next month.



I need to find for our assembly next month.

3 Correct the mistakes in the sentences below.

- 1 This is one of the problems that what can occur when you spend too much money.
- 2 The teacher inspired me most at school was called Miss Gillies.
- 3 There are many teenagers do not feel comfortable talking about their problems.
- 4 It can be very frustrating for those what do not have any power.
- 5 People work with sick and elderly people must be very patient and kind.
- 6 People what continue to work after the age of 65 often live longer.
- 7 I understand that you mean.
- 8 The chart is on the left shows the number of students enrolled from 1999 to 2005.