

# DEFINING VS NON-DEFINING RELATIVE CLAUSES

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## DEFINING

### NO COMMAS

NECESSARY INFORMATION. Essential to distinguish which thing or person we are talking about.

*I called my brother **who lives in Ontario**.*

(=I have more than one brother and I called the one that lives in Ontario)

### WE CAN USE THAT

We CAN use THAT instead of WHO/WHICH.

*That's the mug **WHICH/THAT** I bought in Paris.  
I didn't know the man **WHO/THAT** was there.*

### RELATIVE PRONOUNS CAN BE OMITTED

We CAN omit WHO/WHICH/THAT when they are followed by SUBJECT + VERB

*Do you like the song **(WHICH/THAT)** I wrote?  
That's the man **(WHO/THAT)** I like.*

## NON-DEFINING

### BETWEEN COMMAS

EXTRA INFORMATION. Not necessary to distinguish which thing or person we are talking about.

*My brother, **who lives in Ontario**, is older.*

(=I have only one brother and I'm just mentioning that he lives in Ontario)

### WE CANNOT USE THAT

We CANNOT use THAT instead of WHO/WHICH.

*These bikes, **WHICH** cost a fortune, are made in Japan. (NOT ~~that cost a fortune~~)*

### RELATIVE PRONOUNS CANNOT BE OMITTED

We CANNOT omit WHO/WHICH

*They introduced me to John, **who** I liked immediately. (NOT ~~John, I liked immediately~~)*

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Choose the right word:

- Over-the-counter medication, **which / where** is available without a prescription, can be found in almost every pharmacy.
- People **which / who** suffer from common colds often turn to OTC medications for relief.
- The cough syrup **that / who** I bought yesterday has already made me feel better.
- Painkillers, **which / that** include ibuprofen and acetaminophen, are some of the most popular OTC medications.
- The pharmacist **who / whom** I trust the most recommended this antihistamine.
- There are many types of OTC medications **that / who** treat a variety of symptoms.
- Antacids, **which / that** help with heartburn, can be very effective when taken as directed.
- The directions **that be / are** printed on the box should always be followed carefully.
- Some OTC medications, **which are / were** once prescription-only, have been made more accessible to the public.
- The allergy medicine **who / that** I need is out of stock at the moment.