

Non-Defining Relative Clauses as Sentence Modifiers

News Media – Old vs. New

For decades, families gathered around the television every evening to watch the news, **which gave everyone a shared sense of current events**. Newspapers were printed overnight and delivered to doorsteps early in the morning, **which meant people had to wait hours to read about breaking stories**.



Today, information moves at lightning speed across social media platforms, **which allows news to spread globally in a matter of seconds**. However, user-generated content often lacks proper fact-checking, **which makes it harder to distinguish between real information and fake news**. Many traditional newspapers have been forced to close down or move completely online, **which is why the journalism industry is undergoing a massive transformation**.

Non-defining relative clauses as sentence modifiers

You can use non-defining relative clauses starting with **which** to add a comment, evaluation, or reaction about an **entire previous clause or sentence**.

Key Rules:

1. **Punctuation:** Always put a comma (,) before **which**.
2. **Function:** Unlike standard relative clauses (which refer to a specific noun), sentence modifiers refer to the whole situation described in the main clause.
3. **Common Patterns:**
 - o ..., **which means (that)...** (explains a result or logical implication)
 - o ..., **which is why...** (explains a reason or consequence)
 - o ..., **which makes it + adjective + to...** (comments on an effect)
 - o ..., **which allows/causes/prevents...** (explains an action enabled or caused)

Examples:

- Traditional newspapers were printed once a day, **which meant people got news much slower**.
- Algorithms prioritize engaging content, **which is why sensational headlines get more views**.

Exercise 1: Combine the two sentences into one using **comma + which** to make a comment on the whole main clause.

1. Print newspapers are losing subscribers every year. This causes publishers to reduce their staff.
2. Anyone with a smartphone can broadcast video live. This enables citizen journalists to report news in real time.
3. Social media feeds use personalized algorithms. This is why people often see news that only matches their existing opinions.
4. Older generations relied heavily on radio broadcasts for urgent alerts. This meant they had to listen at specific times of the day.
5. Online news outlets update their websites continuously. This makes it difficult for readers to process all the information.

Exercise 2: Choose the correct option to complete each sentence.

1. Digital journalism relies heavily on advertisement clicks, _____ publishers to use clickbait headlines.

- a) which means
- b) **which leads**
- c) that causes

2. TV news anchors used to be considered highly trustworthy, _____ made them central figures in public life.

- a) **which**
- b) that
- c) what

3. Fact-checking departments in media organizations have been downsized, _____ it easier for misinformation to spread.

- a) which is why
- b) **which makes**
- c) which allows

4. Modern news apps send instant push notifications, _____ readers don't need to look for breaking news manually.

- a) **which means**
- b) which is cause
- c) who means