

Relative pronouns

We use relative pronouns in relative clauses.

We use relative clauses to give more information about something, without having to start a new sentence.

That man over there is called Bill Gates. He started Microsoft. →

*That man over there, **who's** called Bill Gates, started Microsoft.*

Use

Example

who for people

*What's the name of the man **who** created the Internet?*

which for things and animals

*The experiment **which** worked was the last one.*

where for places

*This is the town **where** Albert Einstein was born.*

whose to show possession

*That's the man **whose** sister discovered a new planet.*

Watch out!

- We can use *who* for animals when we give them a personality.
✓ *Our dog, **who's** called Benji, is eight years old.*
- When there is a relative pronoun, remember not to repeat the subject/object.
✗ *What's the name of the man **who** **he** created the World Wide Web?*
✗ *This is the experiment **which** I'm doing **it** at the moment.*

Non-defining relative clauses

Non-defining relative clauses give extra information. The sentence makes sense without the relative clause.

*That man over there, **who** is called Bill Gates, started Microsoft.*

If we remove the relative clause, the sentence still makes sense:

That man over there started Microsoft.

Use

Example

To give extra information

*This program, **which** is totally free, protects your computer against viruses.*

Helpful hints

We use commas with non-defining relative clauses.

✓ *Carl, whose sister is famous, is a friend of mine.*

Defining relative clauses

Defining relative clauses give very important information. If we remove a defining relative clause, the sentence doesn't make sense.

Imagine that there are lots of people in a room. Only one of them is wearing a blue shirt.

*The person **who** is wearing the blue shirt started Microsoft.*

If we remove the relative clause, we won't know which person it is.

✗ *The person started Microsoft.*

Use

Example

To define who or what we are talking about

*This is the TV **which** works. This is the TV **which** doesn't work.*

Helpful hints

- We don't use commas with defining relative clauses.
- We can use *that* instead of *who* and *which*.
✓ *Did you see the programme about the woman **who** invented Tippex?*
✓ *Did you see the programme about the woman **that** invented Tippex?*

A Complete using the words in the box. You have to use some words more than once.

where • which • who • whose

- 1 There's a film on tonight I really want to see.
- 2 Do you know any restaurants they serve vegetarian dishes?
- 3 Can you remember told you about the new nightclub?
- 4 The film, stars Tom Hanks, is based on a book by Dan Brown.
- 5 I've never met anyone before mother was famous!
- 6 Lorenzo, is from Spain originally, has lived here for about ten years.
- 7 Carla, parents are from Mexico, was born in the UK.
- 8 Here's a photo of the hotel we stayed.

B Circle the extra word in each sentence.

- 1 The boy who he sits next to me in class is called Vladimir.
- 2 This book, which I started reading it last week, is really funny.
- 3 Jean, whose her mother is a nurse, wants to be a doctor.
- 4 My mum and dad, who they got married fifteen years ago, met over thirty years ago.
- 5 The jeans which I was telling you about them are over there.

C Rewrite as one sentence using a relative clause.

- 1 My grandfather was an airline pilot. He is sixty-five years old now.
~~My grandfather, who is sixty-five years old now, was an airline pilot.~~
- 2 *Friendly People* is a comedy. It's my favourite programme.

- 3 My friend Michael often comes to play with me. He hasn't got any brothers and sisters.

- 4 My sister loves wearing hats. Her hair is brown.

- 5 New York is an enormous city. It's where I was born.

- 6 This CD is scratched. I only bought it yesterday.

- 7 My brother George has got some great shirts! He hates me borrowing his clothes.

- 8 Our neighbours have never invited us to dinner. Their house is directly opposite ours.

D Look at the pictures and use the prompts to write sentences.



- 1 A tree / tall / have / leaves
The tree which is tall doesn't have any leaves.
B trees / have / leaves / be / short
- 2 A bottle / big / full
B bottles / small / empty
- 3 A girl / has / short hair / be called / Melissa
B girls / hair / be / long / be called / Lucy, Tina and Debbie
- 4 A boy / hold / black basketball / wear / school uniform
B boys / basketballs / be / white / wear / tracksuits

E Tick (✓) the sentences in exercise D where the relative pronoun can be replaced by the word *that*. Put a cross (X) where *that* cannot replace the relative pronoun.

- 1 A B 4 A
B 3 A B
2 A B

F Write one word in each gap.

Actuaries

Did you know that there are people (1) are paid to predict the future? They're called 'actuaries'. I'd never heard of actuaries until my friend Greg, (2) mother is an actuary, told me about them. It's a job (3) sounds quite interesting.

Actuaries usually work for companies, like insurance companies, (4) deal with the chances of things happening in the future. Actuaries have to decide how probable it is that something will happen.

For example, it's more probable that buildings will be flooded in places (5) it rains a lot.

Greg's mum, (6) has been an actuary for about five years, is involved with car insurance.

She works in an office (7) they decide how much car insurance people should pay. It's more probable that a car (8) is new is safer and more reliable than a very old car, so people

(9) cars are new pay less insurance. If there are drivers (10) she thinks will probably have more accidents, she makes them pay more insurance!