

13.5 Adjective Clauses

Key Information

An **adjective clause** is a subordinate clause that modifies a noun or a pronoun and that normally follows the word it modifies. Adjective clauses are introduced by relative pronouns (*who*, *whom*, *whose*, *that*, and *which*) or by the subordinating conjunctions *where* and *when*.

An adjective clause that is needed to make the meaning of the sentence clear is called an **essential clause**, or a **restrictive clause**. An adjective clause that is *not* needed to make the meaning of the sentence clear is a **nonessential**, or **nonrestrictive**, clause.

Commas are always used to set off a nonessential clause. Often, the relative pronoun *that* is used to introduce an essential clause and *which* to introduce a nonessential clause.

The tree **that** Huong planted in the backyard is an elm. (essential clause)
 That tree, **which is ten years old**, has Dutch elm disease. (nonessential clause)
 The letter **I am expecting** is from the state university. (essential clause with *that* omitted)
 This letter, **which has a Mexican stamp**, is from Manolo. (nonessential clause)

■ Identifying Essential and Nonessential Adjective Clauses

Underline each adjective clause in the sentences below. In the space provided, write *EC* for an essential clause and *NC* for a nonessential clause.

- One area that offers many opportunities for high school graduates is sales. EC NC
- Retail sales has jobs that offer opportunities for training and careers. EC NC
- Department stores and other retail stores, which employ about 2.5 million sales-clerks, have tens of thousands of sales openings every year. EC NC
- These employers are looking for high school graduates who can learn to accept responsibility and operate cash registers, which are often similar to computers. who: EC NC
which: EC NC
- Another quality that is a great plus is a lively personality. EC NC
- An able salesclerk may become a manager, whose responsibility it is to supervise an entire department. EC NC
- The top selling jobs are those that pay a commission, which rewards the clerk with a percentage of each sale. that: EC NC
which: EC NC
- An ambitious clerk whose pay includes a commission can make a great deal of money. EC NC
- Clerks try to increase their sales volume because a portion, which varies in size, is returned to them as commission. EC NC
- Experienced clerks may move to departments where more knowledge is required to be an effective salesperson. EC NC