

91 Relative clauses and prepositions

Gandhi is a famous film from 1982. It was filmed in the UK and India, and the actor Ben Kingsley played Mohandas Gandhi, the Indian lawyer **that** the film is about. It was a remarkable film with a lot of famous actors in it, and for the scene of Gandhi's funeral, there were over 300,000 people, **which** is amazing.



1 Prepositions in relative clauses

Verbs often have prepositions after them (e.g. *look for*, *talk about*, *go to*). In relative clauses, we usually put the preposition at the end of the clause:
I'm looking for a book. → *This is the book (that) I'm looking for.*
I was talking about Maria. → *Maria is the woman (who) I was talking about.*
We went to that beach. → *That is the beach (which) we went to.*

2 when, where, why

We can also use *when*, *where* and *why* for relative clauses

- *When* is for a relative clause about time, days, years, etc:
We met on the day when I passed my final exam.
- *Where* is for a relative clause about places:
That's the bank where Joan works.
- *Why* is for a relative clause about reason:
She's working. That's the reason why she can't come.

There is always a subject after *when*, *where* or *why*. It is a different subject from the one in the main clause:

main clause subject relative clause subject
That's the building where we do our exams.



When the relative clause begins with *when* or *where*, we do not include a place or time preposition:

- ✗ *September 20th is the day when we got married on.*
- ✓ *September 20th is the day when we got married.*
- ✗ *That's the house where we spent our childhood in.*
- ✓ *That's the house where we spent our childhood.*

3 Using which to make a comment

We can use *which* to make a comment on the idea in a clause:

For the scene of Gandhi's funeral, there were over 300,000 people, which is amazing.
(The fact that there were over 300,000 people is amazing.)

We took the children to the seaside on Sunday, which was really relaxing.
(Taking the children to the seaside was really relaxing.)

With these relative clauses we need a comma (,) before *which*.

Practice

1 Choose the correct words in *italics*.

- 0 The reason *which* (why) I can't come with you is that I don't have enough money.
- 1 It was really sunny on the day *when* / *where* we had our last exam.
- 2 2007 was the year *when* / *which* there were a lot of floods.
- 3 Have you chosen the date *on when* / *when* you want to have your party?
- 4 I've just read the new book by Orhan Pamuk, *that* / *which* I really enjoyed.
- 5 I'm sure this is the place *when* / *where* we agreed to meet.
- 6 Mrs Coles, I've got the DVD *for which* / *which* you were looking for.

2 Match the two parts of the sentences.

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 0 Last weekend I saw my first football match, | A which was very tiring. |
| 1 David's grandmother died last week, | B which was fantastic news! |
| 2 We had to drive 800km in one day last week, | C which was really boring. |
| 3 My cousin in Canada called last night, | D which was very sad. |
| 4 We had to wait in the queue for two hours, | E which was exciting. |
| 5 We won the top prize of 10,000 euros, | F which was a real surprise. |

3 GRAMMAR IN USE Complete the conversation with the phrases from the box.

- A Excuse me. I'm looking for Jeremy Trent.
 B I'm the person (0)*you're looking for*.....
 Why do you want me?
 A I've got lunch for some people, some sandwiches.
 B Oh, right. Well, put the box down there.
 A Where?

I should give it to I'm pointing
 who's wearing a leather skirt
 which means I pay for everything
 that Alicia's shouting at
 who's shouting at
 who's got a red beard
 you're looking for

- B There! On the chair where (1)!
 OK, who are the sandwiches for?
 A This is for Carol Holmes.
 B She's the woman over there (2) and a black jacket.
 A OK. And these are for Peter Davis.
 B That's him – the man (3)
 A And the salad is for Alicia Keane.
 B Alicia's the woman (4) that boy over there.
 A OK, and finally, George Andropoulos.
 B George is the boy (5)
 A And I've got the bill. Are you the person (6)?
 B Yes, I'll pay it.
 A Are you the director?
 B Yes, I'm the director, (7)!

4 Use the ideas below to write sentences. Add a comment using *which*.

- 0 something you did last week *I went to the cinema, which wasn't very exciting.*
- 1 something you did last weekend
- 2 your last holiday
- 3 a recent piece of news
- 4 a recent celebration