

Relative clauses 1: clauses with **who/that/which**

A

Look at this example sentence:

The woman **who lives next door** is a doctor.

relative clause

A *clause* is a part of a sentence. A *relative clause* tells us which person or thing (or what kind of person or thing) the speaker means:

- ☐ The woman **who lives next door** ... ('who lives next door' tells us which woman)
- ☐ People **who live in the country** ... ('who live in the country' tells us what kind of people)

We use **who** in a relative clause when we are talking about people (not things):

the woman – she lives next door – is a doctor

↓

→ The woman **who lives next door** is a doctor.

we know a lot of people – they live in the country

↓

→ We know a lot of people **who live in the country**.

- ☐ An architect is someone **who designs buildings**.
- ☐ What was the name of the person **who phoned**?
- ☐ Anyone **who wants to apply for the job** must do so by Friday.

You can also use **that** (instead of **who**), but you can't use **which** for people:

- ☐ The woman **that lives next door** is a doctor. (*not* the woman **which**)

Sometimes you must use **who** (*not* that) for people – see Unit 95.

B

When we are talking about things, we use **that** or **which** (*not* who) in a relative clause:

where is the cheese? – it was in the fridge

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→ Where is the cheese { **that** / **which** } was in the fridge?

- ☐ I don't like stories **that have unhappy endings**. (*or* stories **which** have ...)
- ☐ Grace works for a company **that makes furniture**. (*or* a company **which** makes furniture)
- ☐ The machine **that broke down** is working again now. (*or* The machine **which** broke down)

That is more usual than **which**, but sometimes you must use **which** – see Unit 95.

C

Remember that in relative clauses we use **who/that/which**, not **he/she/they/it**.

Compare:

- ☐ 'Who's that woman?' '**She** lives next door to me.'
- I've never spoken to the woman **who** lives next door. (*not* the woman **she** lives)
- ☐ Where is the cheese? **It** was in the fridge.
- Where is the cheese **that** was in the fridge? (*not* the cheese **it** was)

D

What = 'the thing(s) that'. Compare **what** and **that**:

- ☐ **What happened** was my fault. (= the thing that happened)

but

- ☐ Everything **that happened** was my fault. (*not* Everything **what** happened)
- ☐ The machine **that broke down** is now working again. (*not* The machine **what** broke down)

Exercises

92.1 In this exercise you have to explain what some words mean. Choose the right meaning from the box and then write a sentence with **who**. Use a dictionary if necessary.

he/she	steals from a shop designs buildings doesn't believe in God is not brave	he/she	buys something from a shop pays rent to live in a house or apartment breaks into a house to steal things expects the worst to happen
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- (an architect) An architect is someone who designs buildings.
- (a burglar) A burglar is someone
- (a customer)
- (a shoplifter)
- (a coward)
- (an atheist)
- (a pessimist)
- (a tenant)

92.2 Make one sentence from two. Use **who/that/which**.

- A girl was injured in the accident. She is now in hospital.
The girl who was injured in the accident is now in hospital.
- A waitress served us. She was impolite and impatient.
The
- A building was destroyed in the fire. It has now been rebuilt.
The
- Some people were arrested. They have now been released.
The
- A bus goes to the airport. It runs every half hour.
The

92.3 Complete the sentences. Choose from the box and make a relative clause.

invented the telephone	makes furniture
runs away from home	gives you the meaning of words
stole my wallet	can support life
were hanging on the wall	cannot be explained

- Helen works for a company that makes furniture
- The book is about a girl
- What happened to the pictures ?
- A mystery is something
- The police have arrested the man
- A dictionary is a book
- Alexander Bell was the man
- It seems that Earth is the only planet

92.4 Are these sentences right or wrong? Correct them where necessary.

- I don't like stories who have unhappy endings. stories that have
- What was the name of the person who phoned? OK
- Where's the nearest shop who sells bread?
- The driver which caused the accident was fined £500.
- Do you know the person that took these pictures?
- We live in a world what is changing all the time.
- Dan said some things about me that were not true.
- What was the name of the horse it won the race?