

28 Relative clauses 1

A Relative clauses

- Relative clauses are short phrases beginning with words like *who*, *that* and *which* that define or describe people and things. There are two types:

- Defining relative clauses: we use these to identify exactly which person or thing we mean.
The candidate who we interviewed on Friday is better than this one.

The relative clause is part of the noun phrase. The information is necessary for the sentence to make sense.

- Non-defining relative clauses: we use these to add extra information about a person or thing.
Capellas, whose father was a Greek immigrant who entered the United States after World War II, returned yesterday to Greece on a business trip. (International Herald Tribune website)
The information may be interesting, but it is not a necessary part of the sentence. To show this in writing we use commas.

Non-defining clauses are more common in writing. In speech, we often give the same information by just using two short sentences. Compare:

The salesman, who was very helpful, said this model was in stock. (writing)
'The salesman was very helpful. He said this model was in stock.' (speech)

- Look again at the previous example. Remember that we are just adding extra information about a salesman. If there is more than one salesman and we want to say which one we are talking about, then we use a defining relative clause.
'The salesman who I spoke to on the phone yesterday said this model was in stock, but now you tell me that you don't have any. I've come all the way here to buy it.'

B Relative pronouns

- The words *who*, *which*, *that*, *whom* and *whose* can begin a relative clause. They are called relative pronouns.
- For people both *who* and *that* are used, but *who* is more common.
The candidate who they chose for the job has a finance background.
- For things or ideas both *which* and *that* are used, but *that* is more common, especially in speech.
The products that you ordered were sent today.
The food sector faces another problem. In order to participate in the EU's single market it will have to conform to the Common Agricultural Policy, which makes up 40% of all EU regulations. (Business Central Europe website)
The fight for survival of daily business will be won by the organizations that adapt most successfully to the new world that is developing. (BusinessWeek website)
- The relative pronoun *whose* shows that something belongs to someone or something.
I've invited to the meeting everyone whose work is relevant to this project.
The European Union is an organisation whose policies change quite slowly.
He owns 100 per cent of this company, whose sales hit close to \$3 million in 1998. (Asia, Inc. website)
- In formal English it is possible to use *whom* instead of *who* where *who* is the object of the sentence. But in modern English most speakers only use *who*.
The candidate who/whom we chose for the job has an MBA in corporate finance.

C Leaving out the relative pronoun in a defining relative clause

- We can leave out *who*, *which*, *that* (but not *whose*) in a defining relative clause if they are followed immediately by a noun or pronoun.
The technician (who) Tony spoke to said the network was working fine.
The salad (which/that) I had for my starter was superb.
This is usual in spoken English.
- We must keep the relative pronoun if it is followed immediately by a verb.
The technician who spoke to Tony said the network was working fine.
The salad which/that came with the fish was superb.

D Non-defining relative clauses

- We must keep the relative pronoun in non-defining clauses. We cannot leave it out (it makes no difference whether it is followed by a noun or a verb).
The technician, who my colleagues know well, said the network was working fine.
The technician, who spent over an hour here, said the network was working fine.
The salad, which he'd spent hours preparing, was superb.
The salad, which had avocado in it, was superb.
- *That* is never used in a non-defining relative clause.
Chile, which is an important market for us, is having some currency problems.

E Relative pronouns and prepositions

- Normally we put prepositions at the end of the relative clause.
a) *The person (who) I got these figures from said they were accurate.*
b) *Unilever is a company (that/which) we know quite a lot about.*
c) *The person (who) I spoke to was called Pam.*
- But in formal English it is possible to put prepositions in front of *whom*, *which* and *whose* (but not *who* or *that*). Compare with the previous examples:
a) *The person from whom I got these figures said they were accurate.* (formal, rare)
b) *Unilever is a company about which we know quite a lot.* (formal, rare)
c) *The person to whom I spoke was called Pam.* (incorrect)
- We do not put another pronoun after the preposition.
(NOT *Unilever is a company that we know quite a lot about it.*)

28 Practice

Exercise 1 A

Decide whether the words in *italics* are defining or non defining relative clauses. Write D or ND.

- 1 The man *who is in reception* has been waiting for ten minutes. D
- 2 The food, *which was very nice*, was served at the bar.
- 3 The projector, *which has a new bulb*, is over there.
- 4 The projector *which has a new bulb* is over there.
- 5 The train *which leaves at 8 am* doesn't stop at Bath.
- 6 The train, *which leaves at 8 am*, doesn't stop at Bath.

Exercise 2 B

Complete the sentences with *who*, *whose* or *that*.

- 1 The customer *whose* company I visited is phoning this afternoon.
- 2 The manual they sent explains everything.
- 3 It's difficult to say this fax was sent by.
- 4 The candidates CVs I looked at this morning were all very good.
- 5 I don't remember I spoke to when I called yesterday.
- 6 Your colleague, I met this morning, had a different opinion.
- 7 Toyota is a manufacturer reputation is excellent all over the world.
- 8 The contract you showed me before was different to this one.
- 9 I can't remember I invited to the meeting.
- 10 Do you know Catherine works for?
- 11 The consultant, seems very young, is speaking to Martin Sommer.
- 12 They promoted the manager sales team was most successful.

Exercise 3 C D

Put a bracket around the relative pronoun if you can leave it out. Put a tick at the end if you must keep the relative pronoun.

- 1 The book **<that>** you lent me about e-commerce is really interesting.
- 2 The company **which** is our main competitor is Apollo. ✓
- 3 The name **which** they chose for the new model is Prima.
- 4 The meeting room, **which** wasn't very large, became hot and stuffy.
- 5 In the end, the sales campaign was the best **that** we'd ever had.
- 6 These are the people **whose** names appear on the database.
- 7 The people **who** attended the presentation found it very useful.
- 8 The supplier **who** we visited last week had better quality than this one.
- 9 Richard Branson, **who** started with almost nothing, is a typical entrepreneur.
- 10 *Newsweek* **is** the English-language magazine **that** I read most often.

Exercise 4 E

Rewrite the formal sentence as everyday informal sentences, beginning as shown.

- 1 These are the colleagues with whom I went to the conference.
These are the colleagues I *went to the conference with*
- 2 This is the breakthrough for which we have been waiting.
This is the breakthrough we
- 3 That's the hotel at which I stayed.
That's the hotel I
- 4 When I call the accountants, Richard is the person with whom I usually deal.
When I call the accountants, Richard is the person I
- 5 This is the catalogue from which we choose the samples.
This is the catalogue we
- 6 This is the area for which I am responsible.
This is the area I

Exercise 5 B C E

Decide whether each sentence is possible or impossible. Write P or I.

- 1 This is the customer we received the complaint from. P
- 2 This is the customer who we received the complaint from.
- 3 This is the customer from whom we received the complaint.
- 4 This is the customer from who we received the complaint.
- 5 This is the product which we're depending on.
- 6 This is the product we're depending on.
- 7 This is the product on whom we're depending.
- 8 This is the product on which we're depending.
- 9 The consultants with who we deal are called AlphaCom.
- 10 The consultants with whom we deal are called AlphaCom.
- 11 The consultants who we deal with are called AlphaCom.
- 12 The consultants we deal with are called AlphaCom.

Relative clauses (2) (Tom, who is only six, can speak three languages.)

A Some relative clauses are used to add extra information about a noun, but this information is not necessary to explain which person or thing we mean:

- Valerie Polkoff, **who has died aged 90**, escaped from Russia with her family in 1917.
- We received **an offer of £80,000 for the house, which we accepted**.

These are sometimes called **non-defining relative clauses**. We don't use them often in everyday speech, but they occur frequently in written English. Notice that we put a comma between the **noun** and a non-defining relative clause, and another comma at the end of this clause if it is not also the end of a sentence.

When we use a non-defining relative clause to add information about a **person or people**:

■ we use **who** as the *subject* of the clause

- One of the people arrested was Mary Arundel, **who is a member of the local council**.

■ we use **who** or **whom** as the *object* of the clause, although **whom** is more formal and rarely used in spoken English:

- Professor Johnson, **who(m) I have long admired**, is to visit the university next week.



When we use a non-defining relative clause to add information about a **thing or group of things**, we use **which** as the *subject* or *object* of the clause:

- These drugs, **which** are used to treat stomach ulcers, have been withdrawn from sale.
- That Masters course, **which** I took in 1990, is no longer taught at the college.

That is sometimes used instead of **which**, but some people think this is incorrect, so it is probably safer not to use it. We also use **which** to refer to the whole situation talked about in the sentence outside the relative clause:

- The book won't be published until next year, **which** is disappointing.
- I have to go to hospital on Monday, **which** means I won't be able to see you.

We can also use **whose** in a non-defining relative clause (see also Unit 72):

- Neil Adams, **whose** parents are both teachers, won first prize in the competition.

⚠ Notice that we don't use **zero relative pronoun** in a non-defining relative clause.

B When we want to add information about the whole or a part of a particular number of things or people we can use a non-defining relative clause with **of which** or **of whom** after words such as **all, both, each, many, most, neither, none, part, some, a number** (one, two, etc.; the first, the second, etc.; half, a third, etc.) and **superlatives** (the best, the biggest, etc.):

- The speed of growth of a plant is influenced by a number of factors, **most of which** we have no control over.
- The bank was held up by a group of men, **three of whom** were said to be armed.
- The President has made many visits to Japan, **the most recent of which** began today.

C We can use the following phrases at the beginning of a non-defining relative clause: **at which point/time**, **by which point/time**, **during which time**, and **in which case**:

- It might snow this weekend, **in which case** we won't go to Wales.
- The bandages will be taken off a few days after the operation, **at which point** we will be able to judge how effective the treatment has been.
- The next Olympics are in three years, **by which time** Stevens will be 34.

EXERCISES

71.1 Add one of the pieces of information below to each sentence. Add **who** or **which**, and put the non-defining relative clause in an appropriate place in the sentence. (A)

has more than 50 members caused such damage in the islands is an aviation expert
stole a computer from the office is set in the north of Australia ended yesterday

- , **which has more than 50 members**,
- 1 The Southam Chess Club **l** meets weekly on Friday evenings.
 - 2 Dr Richard Newman was asked to comment on the latest helicopter crash.
 - 3 The strike by train drivers is estimated to have cost over £3 million.
 - 4 John Graham's latest film is his first for more than five years.
 - 5 The police are looking for two boys aged about 14.
 - 6 The hurricane has now headed out to sea.

71.2 Write two sentences as one, using a non-defining relative clause beginning with **all, both, each, etc.**, + **of which** or **of whom**. (B)

- 1 The film is about the lives of three women. Kate Dillon plays all the women.
The film is about the lives of three women, all of whom are played by Kate Dillon.



- 2 The island's two million inhabitants have been badly affected by the drought. Most of the island's inhabitants are peasant farmers.
- 3 She has two older brothers. Neither of her brothers went to university.
- 4 About 30 of her friends and relations came to the airport to welcome her back. Many of her friends and relations had travelled long distances.
- 5 The minister has recently visited Estonia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan. They all have large Russian minorities.
- 6 The fish are multi-coloured. The biggest of the fish is only 2 cm long.
- 7 Scotland have won their last five international matches. One of these matches was against England.

71.3 Decide which of the underlined phrases is correct in these sentences and add an appropriate preposition in the space. (C)

- 1 I might fail the test, in **which case** / **which point** I'd probably re-sit it next year.
- 2 A bull charged towards the car, when **which time** / **which point** I drove away quickly.
- 3 I didn't finish work until 10 o'clock, at **which time** / **which case** everyone had already gone home.
- 4 The meeting might go on for three or four hours, at **which time** / **which case** I'll be late home from work.
- 5 Sam started to tell one of his terrible old jokes, at **which point** / **which case** I decided that I should go home.
- 6 I hadn't seen Jane for nearly ten years, at **which point** / **which time** I had got married and had two children.

A Combining sentences

- Look at this example of two short separate sentences.
I'm taking a flight. It goes via Frankfurt.

We can combine the sentences using a relative clause. There are two ways, but the meanings are the same.

- I'm taking a flight **that goes via Frankfurt.***
- OR
- The flight **(that) I'm taking** goes via Frankfurt.*

B Use of *what*

- We can use the relative pronoun *what* to mean *the thing(s) that*.
*I didn't understand **what** she said.* (= the things that she said)
What we need is a better marketing strategy. (= the thing that we need is)
*Having a few huge corporations control our outlets of expression could lead to less aggressive news coverage and a more muted marketplace of ideas. Conglomeration affects **what** the media companies do and, in turn, **what** you read, watch, and hear.* (Brillscontent website)

C Use of *where, when and why*

- We can use the relative adverbs *where, when* and *why* with their normal meanings to identify which thing we are talking about.
*Analysts said it was difficult to understand **the reason why the European Central Bank had cut rates.*** (Observer website)
- We can leave out *when* or *why*, or use *that*.
*Do you remember the day **(when) I started working here?***
*Do you remember the day **that I started working here?***
- We must keep *where*, except when there is a preposition at the end of the clause. In this case we leave it out or use *that*.
*The hotel **where I stayed** was quite cheap.*
*The hotel **(that) I stayed in** was quite cheap.*

D Relative clauses with a participle (*-ing, -ed*)

- The relative clause can have a continuous verb form (with an *-ing* ending) or a passive verb form (with an *-ed* ending).
*The people **who are making the real decisions** are all at Head Office.*
*The products **that were attracting most interest** were the smaller, lighter models.*
*Passengers **who are seated in rows J-P** can now board the aircraft.*
*Food **which is sold in supermarkets** needs a relatively long shelf-life.*
- In these cases we can simplify the sentence by leaving out both the relative pronoun and the verb *be*.
*The people **making the real decisions** are all at Head Office.*
*The products **attracting most interest** were the smaller, lighter models.*
*Passengers **seated in rows J-P** can now board the aircraft.*
*Food **sold in supermarkets** needs a relatively long shelf-life.*
*Asda, **now owned by Wal-Mart**, is keen to increase the space in its stores devoted to household goods, electricals and entertainment products.* (Independent website)

29 Practice

Exercise 1 A

Combine each pair of sentences by including the word given in brackets.

- Last year we introduced a new line. It's aimed at the youth market. (that)
The new line ~~that we introduced last year~~ is aimed at the youth market.
- I'd like you to meet a colleague. He could be a useful contact for you. (who)
I'd like you to meet a colleague
- A candidate's CV is on your desk. She deserves an interview. (whose)
The candidate deserves an interview.
- A visitor is coming next week. She's from our Paris office. (who)
The visitor is from our Paris office.
- Tom took me to a restaurant. It was called 'Noodle Heaven'. (that)
The restaurant was called 'Noodle Heaven'.
- I heard a man's presentation. He was an investment banker. (whose)
The man was an investment banker.
- Here is a mobile phone. I was telling you about it. (that)
Here is the mobile phone
- Over there is a site. They're going to build a new factory. (where)
The site is over there.

Exercise 2 A

If the sentence is correct put a tick (✓) at the end. If the sentence has a word which should not be there, write the incorrect word at the end.

- The woman who I asked didn't know the way. ✓
- The firm whose their stand was at the back had very few visitors. ~~their~~
- That was the longest meeting I've ever been in.
- The train which it goes to Brussels leaves from here.
- The products which sell best they are those with nice packaging.
- This model, which it was launched last year, is selling very well.
- Everyone that I spoke to advised me to try again.
- The company where I used to work it was called Interlink.

Exercise 3 B C unit 28

Underline the correct words. This exercise includes some revision of unit 28.

- The flight which/who I'm taking leaves from Terminal 2.
- She's from the company which/whose products we distribute.
- Everyone who/which was at the meeting will receive a copy of the minutes.
- Message. To whom/who it may concern: please do not leave dirty coffee cups here.
- There were some interesting ideas at the meeting that/what I went to.
- It's not the first time that/what they've done this.
- That/What I like best about my job is the contact with people.
- Has anybody seen the folder what/that I left on this desk?
- The room where/that I work has very little natural light.
- The room where/that I work in has very little natural light.

Exercise 4 B D

Complete the sentences with *what*, *which* or *who*, or tick (✓) the space if the sentence is already correct.

- 1 There's a lot of noise from the builders working next door.
- 2 Mike doesn't really know he wants in his career.
- 3 I was talking to a man going to the same conference as us.
- 4 I was talking to a man is going to the same conference as us.
- 5 I asked her she was thinking.
- 6 This is a new drug was developed at our Cambridge laboratories.
- 7 This is a new drug developed at our Cambridge laboratories.
- 8 This drug, was developed at our Cambridge laboratories, is fantastic.
- 9 This drug, developed at our Cambridge laboratories, is fantastic.
- 10 we need now is better brand recognition.
- 11 The 'assets' include everything owned by the company.
- 12 I didn't really understand he was talking about.

Exercise 5 A

35 Complete the article by writing relative clauses based on the notes below. Begin with either *who* or *which*.

The Battle for GUCCI

In 1999 Bernard Arnault's LVMH fought a battle to take over Gucci, (1) which was run by Domenico De Sole. De Sole received news that LVMH, (2) had bought 5% of its shares. This was going to be the battle (3) De Sole gathered together a team of people (4) It included American lawyer Allan Tuttle and Bob Singer, (5) There were two options: either negotiate

with Arnault and sell the business, or defend Gucci by finding a friendly 'white knight' to rescue them. They decided to fight. The models at the Gucci men's show in January 1999 had white faces and teeth like Dracula, (6) Meanwhile Arnault had accumulated shares (7)

white knight (8) arrived in the form of Francois Pinault, (9) PPR was very successful in Europe, but Pinault wanted a chance to build a global group. Pinault agreed to invest US\$3 billion, (10)

In return Pinault's group gained representatives on a new strategic committee, but he agreed to leave control of the company with De Sole and the senior Gucci team. ■

- 1 LVMH fought a battle with Gucci. Gucci was run by Domenico De Sole.
- 2 LVMH had bought 5% of Gucci's shares. LVMH was the largest luxury goods company in the world.
- 3 This was going to be a battle. It would decide the future of the industry.
- 4 De Sole gathered together a team of people. He could trust them.
- 5 Bob Singer was in the team. Bob Singer was the chief financial officer.
- 6 The models looked like Dracula. This was meant to be a message for Arnault.
- 7 Arnault accumulated shares. They represented 34% of Gucci's total stock.
- 8 A white knight arrived. Gucci had been looking for one.
- 9 Francois Pinault was the white knight. He was the head of a non-food retail group called PPR.
- 10 Pinault invested US\$3 billion. This was a 42% share in Gucci.