



RELATIVE CLAUSES

WHAT ARE RELATIVE CLAUSES?

A relative clause is a part of a sentence that modifies a noun (person/place/thing) in a sentence.

Example:

The woman **that has just left the shop** didn't buy anything.

('that has just left the shop' is the relative clause that modifies the noun 'woman' by telling us which woman the speaker is referring to.)

WHY ARE RELATIVE CLAUSES IMPORTANT?

We use relative clauses to give additional information about something without starting another sentence. By combining sentences within a relative clause, your text becomes more fluent and you can avoid repeating certain words.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF RELATIVE CLAUSES:

There are two types of relative clauses: **defining relative clauses** and **non-defining relative clauses**.

DEFINING RELATIVE CLAUSES:

A defining relative clause gives essential information about the noun (person/place/thing) it modifies. Without this clause, the sentence would not make much sense as the reader would not be able to identify the noun in the sentence that the writer is describing.

'Who', **'whose'** and **'that'** can be used to describe people.

'Which', **'whose'** and **'that'** can be used to describe things.



Example:

The hotel **that we stayed in** wasn't bad.

('that we stayed in' is a defining relative clause that indicates to the reader which hotel we are talking about.)

Do you know the girl **who is talking to Tom**?

('who is talking to Tom' is a defining relative clause that indicates to the reader which girl we are talking about.)

NON-DEFINING RELATIVE CLAUSES:

A non-defining relative clause gives extra information about a noun and has commas at both ends.

'Who' and 'whose' can be used to describe people.

'Which' and 'whose' can be used to describe things.

'That' cannot be used to describe people or things in non-defining relative clauses

Example:

My sister, **who lives in France**, is coming to stay with me next week.

('who lives in France' is not necessary information, but gives extra detail about the noun 'sister')

Jim, **who we met yesterday**, is very nice.

('who we met yesterday' is extra information about how we know Jim, but is not essential to the sentence.)

This watch, **which my grandfather gave to me**, was a gift for my birthday.



(**which my grandfather gave to me**’ tells the reader where the watch came from, which is extra information.)

Reference:

"Term: Relative Clause." (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.usingenglish.com/glossary/relative-clause.html>

"Relative Clauses." (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.ego4u.com/en/cram-up/grammar/relative-clauses>

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