


What are relative clauses?

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Often when we talk to someone in English, we carefully use words to keep our sentences short. Sometimes, it so happens that we fall short of words or rather we don't get the appropriate word to explain a situation. At this time, relative clauses come to save us.



RELATIVE CLAUSES

- We use a relative clause to give extra information about the nouns in the main clause, without starting another sentence.
- The relative clause goes immediately after the noun it relates to.
- The relative pronouns are:

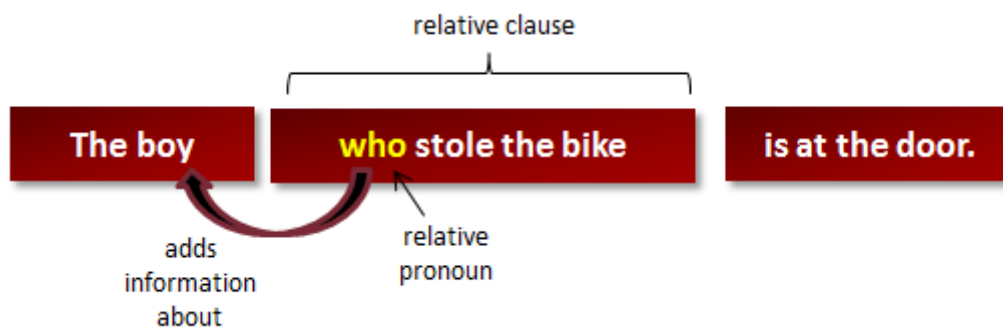
| | |
|--------------|---|
| WHO / THAT | Subject or object pronoun for PEOPLE |
| WHICH / THAT | Subject or object pronoun for ANIMALS OR THINGS |
| WHERE | Refers to a PLACE |
| WHEN | Refers to a TIME expression |
| WHOSE | POSSESSION for people, animals and things. |

Relative clauses provide additional information that define a person or thing, by using relative pronouns. Relative pronouns include that, which, who, whose, where, when, etc., and are connected to follow a preceding noun. When we combine a sentence with a relative clause, the sentence becomes more fluent and also avoids repetition of certain words. Relative clause will include a subject and a verb in a sentence.

Example:

- Girls who hate chocolate are very rare.

Here, in the above sentence, we are referring to the girls who hate chocolate. If there was no relative clause, the sentence would mean something else.



There Are Two Types Of Relative Clauses:

1. Defining relative clause

Defining relative clause provide a detailed information about the specific expression. Mostly, these clauses

are used in definitions. These clauses are not put in commas.

Example:

- Do you know the boy who is talking to Shilpa?
- A dog is an animal that barks.

2. Non – Defining relative clause

Non – defining relative clause are those which gives additional information, but do not define it. These clauses are put in commas.

Example:

- Do you know the boy, who is talking to Shilpa?

Relative Pronouns & their usage

Who – subject or object pronoun for people

Which – subject or object pronoun for animals and things

That – subject or object pronoun for people, animals and things in defining relative clauses

Whom – object pronoun for people, particularly in non-defining relative clauses

Whose – possession for people animals and things

Subject or Object Pronoun

You can identify the above relative pronoun as to a subject or object pronoun by following these points

- If the relative pronoun is followed by a verb, then the relative pronoun is a subject pronoun. Subject pronouns must always be used.
- If the relative pronoun is not followed by a verb and either is followed by a noun or pronoun, then the relative pronoun is an object pronoun. Object pronouns can be dropped in defining relative clauses.

Examples:

- The key which is lying on the table is mine.
- The key (which) Gautam lay on the table is mine.

The above explanations might have cleared your confusion about a relative clause. However, a course to [improve English](#) will be helpful to better your communication skills. You can also learn the tricks to speaking fluent English once you join a professional course.

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-By Chander Madan

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