Which vs who vs That - Learn the correct usage

Created: Monday, 30 November 2015 13:55 | Published: Monday, 30 November 2015 13:55 | Written by Shailja Varma | Print

In English, there are many words which confuse us with their usage. Amongst them are which, who and that. These words are commonly used in daily conversations. Simple words are the ones which we find easy to understand but are hard to use in conversations. Being familiar with the grammar rules can make any word a simple deal. Let's understand the correct usage of which, who and that and the rules to use them.



Rules To Use

1. Who and (sometimes) that refer to people. That and which refer to groups or things.

Examples:
- He's the one who was crying in the interview.
- The person who ordered an Iphone immediately after its launch is from that college.
- The gang that won prize live in my area.
- He belongs to a great organization, which specializes in saving people during natural calamities.

2. That familiarizes an essential clause in the sentence. An essential clause is the one which adds information that is vital to the point of the sentence.

Examples:
- Can you send me that childhood picture of our group?
- Don't touch that bag it might possibly be an explosive.

In the above sentences "that" plays an important role without it we could not have understood the sentence.

Whereas, which introduces a nonessential clause, which adds an extra information.

Examples:
- Can you send me our childhood pic which is in your mobile?
- Don't touch the bag which is in red color.

In the above sentences, after the word "which" the information provided is additional, but not an essential

one.

3. If in a sentence, “that” has already appeared, then sometimes which is also used to introduce the next clause, whether it is essential or nonessential.

Example:
- That which doesn't kill you makes you stronger.

Take a quiz:

1. The person _____ rang the doorbell was wearing a red coat. (who, that)
2. Tell me _____ you are looking for and I'll try to help you. (Who, that)
3. There are several coats here. _____ one is yours? (Which, that)
4. She pointed to a black car _____ was parked next to hers. (Which, who)
5. This is a team that is going places. (That, which)

Correct answers: 1. Who 2. Who 3. Which 4. Which 5. That

Hope the above explanation and examples helped to understand the difference between which, that and who and improve your English communication skills. You can also join an Online Spoken English course and learn English speaking skills.

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