

# Grammar: Relative Clauses

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## Relative clauses

Relative Clauses are used to provide extra information. This information can either:

- define something (defining clause),  
**Example:**  
*The man who is wearing a black jacket is a police officer.*
- or provide unnecessary, but interesting information (non-defining clause).  
**Example:**  
*Lady Gaga, who is a famous singer, is appreciated by a lot of teenagers.*

Relative clauses can be introduced by:

1. A relative pronoun: **who, whom, which, that, whose.**

**Example:** "The man **who** is standing there is a famous writer."

2. A relative adverb: **where, why and when.**

**Example:** " The restaurant **where** I have dinner is nice."

3. None of them.

**Example:** "The man I met is extremely wealthy"

## Relative Pronouns

**who** - subject or object pronoun for people

*They arrested the man **who** broke into the bank.*

**which** - subject or object pronoun

*I read the book **which** is you had told me about.*

**which** - referring to a whole sentence

*They offered me help **which** I appreciated a lot.*

**whom** - used for object pronoun for people, especially in non-restrictive relative clauses (in restrictive relative clauses use *who*)

*The girl **whom** you showed me yesterday joined our club.*

**that** - subject or object pronoun for people, animals and things in restrictive relative clauses (*who* or *which* are also possible)

*I like the poem **that** you wrote.*

## Relative adverbs

**where** - referring to a place

*The café **where** I usually go is nice.*

**when** - referring to a time

*Valentine's Day is a day **when** lovers exchange gifts.*

**why** - referring to a reason

*This is **why** I wrote this book.*

## Subject Pronoun or Object Pronoun?

You can distinguish subject and object pronouns as follows:

- If the relative pronoun is not followed by a noun or pronoun, it is a *subject pronoun*. *Subject relative pronouns* can never be omitted (dropped.)

**Example:**

*The apple **which** is lying on the table is sweet.*

*The teacher **who** lives next door is nice.*

NOT

~~*The apple is lying on the table is sweet.*~~

~~*The teacher lives next door is nice.*~~

- If the relative pronoun is followed by a noun or pronoun, the relative pronoun is an *object pronoun*. *Object relative pronouns* can be omitted (dropped) in restrictive (defining) relative clauses.

**Example:**

*The film (**which**) we watched yesterday was fantastic.*

*The writer (**who/whom**) we met last weekend is very famous.*

## [Exercises on relative clauses](#)