RELATIVE CLAUSES

Read the text and decide what for each relative pronoun is used.

Ted Ingram, ***who*** *is 91 years old this year*, could enter the Guiness Book of Records as the world's oldest paperboy. He has delivered newspapers in the village of Winterborn Monckton, ***where*** *he lives*, since he was 23. Ted moved to the village in 1938 and got a job on a farm, ***where*** *he drove a tractor*. He started delivering papers in 1942 to earn a bit more money.

The highlighted words are relative pronouns. They are used to write relative clauses.

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

How to Form Relative Clauses

Imagine, a girl is talking to Tom. You want to know who she is and ask a friend whether he knows her. You could say:

A girl is talking to Tom. Do you know the girl?

That sounds rather complicated, doesn't it? It would be easier with a relative clause: you put both pieces of information into one sentence. Start with the most important thing – you want to know who the girl is.

Do you know the girl …?

As your friend cannot know which girl you are talking about, you need to put in the additional information – the girl is talking to Tom. Use "the girl" only in the first part of the sentence, in the second part replace it with the relative pronoun (for people, use the relative pronoun "who"). So the final sentence is:

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

RELATIVE PRONOUNS

Relative pronoun	Use	Example
Who	subject or object pronoun for people	I told you about the woman *who* lives next door.
Which	subject or object pronoun for animals and things	Do you see the cat *which* is lying on the roof?
Which	referring to a whole sentence	He couldn't read *which* surprised me.
Whose	possession for people animals and things	Do you know the boy *whose* mother is a nurse?
Whom	object pronoun for people, especially in non-defining relative clauses (in defining relative clauses we colloquially prefer *who*)	I was invited by the professor *whom* I met at the conference.
That	subject or object pronoun for people, animals and things in defining relative clauses (*who* or *which* are also possible)	I don't like the table *that* stands in the kitchen.

Subject Pronoun or Object Pronoun?

Subject and object pronouns cannot be distinguished by their forms - who, which, that are used for subject and object pronouns. You can, however, distinguish them as follows:

If the relative pronoun is followed by a verb, the relative pronoun is a *subject pronoun*. Subject pronouns must always be used.

the apple **which** *is* lying on the table

If the relative pronoun is not followed by a verb (but by a noun or pronoun), the relative pronoun is an *object pronoun*. Object pronouns can be dropped in defining relative clauses, which are then called *Contact Clauses*.

the apple **(which)** *George* lay on the table

RELATIVE ADVERBS

A relative adverb can be used instead of a relative pronoun plus preposition. This often makes the sentence easier to understand.

This is the shop **in which** I bought my bike.

→ This is the shop **where** I bought my bike.

Relative adverb	Meaning	Use	Example
When	in/on which	refers to a time expression	the day *when* we met him
Where	in/at which	refers to a place	the place *where* we met him
Why	for which	refers to a reason	the reason *why* we met him

DEFINING RELATIVE CLAUSES

Defining relative clauses (also called *identifying relative clauses* or *restrictive relative clauses*) give detailed information defining a general term or expression. Defining relative clauses are not put in commas.

Imagine, Tom is in a room with five girls. One girl is talking to Tom and you ask somebody whether he knows this girl. Here the relative clause defines which of the five girls you mean.

I called my brother who lives in Ontario (I have more than one brother and I called the one that lives in Ontario)

Defining relative clauses are often used in definitions.

A seaman is someone who works on a ship.

Object pronouns in defining relative clauses can be dropped. (Sentences with a relative clause without the relative pronoun are called *Contact Clauses*.)

The boy **(who/whom)** we met yesterday is very nice.

NON-DEFINING RELATIVE CLAUSES

Non-defining relative clauses (also called *non-identifying relative clauses* or *non-restrictive relative clauses*) give additional information on something, but do not define it. Non-defining relative clauses are put in commas.

My brother, who lives in Ontario, is older. (I have only one brother and I am just mentioning that he lives in Ontario)

Note: In non-defining relative clauses, *who/which* may not be replaced with *that*.

Object pronouns in non-defining relative clauses must be used.

Jim, who/whom we met yesterday, is very nice.

How to Shorten Relative Clauses?

Relative clauses with *who*, *which*, *that* as subject pronoun can be replaced with a participle. This makes the sentence shorter and easier to understand.

I told you about the woman *who lives* next door. – I told you about the woman *living* next door.

Do you see the cat *which is lying* on the roof? – Do you see the cat *lying* on the roof?

EXERCISES ON RELATIVE CLAUSES

A) Study the situations and then decide whether the following relative clauses are defining or non-defining.

Defining – no commas
Non-defining – commas

1. I have three brothers.
   - My brother who lives in Sidney came to see me last month.
   - My brother, who lives in Sidney, came to see me last month.
2. I have one sister.
   - My sister who is 25 years old spent her holiday in France.
   - My sister, who is 25 years old, spent her holiday in France.
3. Bob's mum has lost her keys.
   - Bob's mum who is a musician has lost her car keys.
   - Bob's mum, who is a musician, has lost her car keys.
4. My friend Jane moved to Canada.
   - My friend Jane whose husband is Canadian moved to Canada last week.
   - My friend Jane, whose husband is Canadian, moved to Canada last week.
5. I am a shoe fanatic.
   - The shoes which I bought yesterday are very comfortable.
   - The shoes, which I bought yesterday, are very comfortable.
6. Mr. Robinson is very famous.
   - Mr. Robinson whom I met at the trade fair is a famous inventor.
   - Mr. Robinson, whom I met at the trade fair, is a famous inventor.
7. Tamara has two cats. Both of them are black.
   - Tamara's two cats which can play outside are black.
   - Tamara's two cats, which can play outside, are black.
8. Kevin has four cats. Two of them are black.
   - Kevin's two cats which are black can play outside.
   - Kevin's two cats, which are black, can play outside.
9. We are on holiday. Yesterday we visited a church.
   - The church which we visited yesterday is very old.
   - The church, which we visited yesterday, is very old.
10. We are on holiday. Yesterday we visited a church.
    - St. Mary's Church which we visited yesterday is very old.
    - St. Mary's Church, which we visited yesterday, is very old

Forming relative clauses

B) Combine the sentences using a relative clause. Use relative pronouns only where necessary. Note that you have to use commas in some of the sentences.

A holiday in Scotland

1. We spent our holiday in Scotland last year. Scotland is in the north of Great Britain.

   Last year we ……..

2. People live in Scotland. They are called Scots.

The people……..

3. We first went to Edinburgh. Edinburgh is the capital of Scotland.

We first…….

4. Arthur Conan Doyle was born in Edinburgh. He wrote the Sherlock Holmes stories.

Arthur Conan Doyle……..

5. Then we visited a lake. It is in the Highlands.

The lake…….

6. Loch Ness is 37 km long. People know it for its friendly monster.

Loch Ness …….

7. There we met an old man. He told us that he had seen Nessie.

An old man……

8. We then travelled to a mountain. The mountain is near the town of Fort

   William.

We then ……..

9. The mountain is the highest mountain in Great Britain. It is called Ben Nevis.

The mountain ……..

11. I sent you a postcard. It was written on the summit of Ben Nevis.

The postcard ……

C) COMPLETE THESE SENTENCES WITH A SUITABLE RELATIVE PRONOUN OR ADVERB

1. That is the man helped me when I fell down in the street.
2. Is that your car? No, mine is the one is parked just opposite the bank.
3. That is the woman complained about the room service.
4. This is the park we first met. Do you remember?
5. So, James is the man son came on the school trip with us? I didn't know.
6. If you have any question, ask the girl is standing at the desk. She'll help you.
7. They had to put away the dog bit the boy. It was too dangerous.
8. I'm looking for a person surname begins with a "k".
9. Do you still go to that pub we used to go as students?
10. The heating is not working. Do you know anyone can fix it?

D) JOIN THESE SENTENCES USING RELATIVE PRONOUNS BEGINNING WITH THE WORDS GIVEN. OMIT THE PRONOUN IF POSSIBLE.

1. The girl is my sister. I'm talking to the girl. The girl……is my sister.
2. This is the chair. The carpenter repaired it last week. This is the chair…….
3. She is married to a man. He is richer than her. She is married to a man……..
4. She is the friend. She helped me with my homework. She is the friend…….
5. That is the swimming-pool. I used to go swimming there. That is the swimming-pool ……..
6. That is the man. His wife is a famous actress. This is the man……
7. A doctor examined me last Friday. He was really kind. The doctor…….. was really kind.
8. The woman called the police. Her car had been stolen. The woman…… called the police.
9. I went to a restaurant last week. It was very expensive. The restaurant……. was very expensive.
10. I saw a film last night. It was very interesting. The film……. was very interesting.

E) ARE THESE RELATIVE CLAUSES DEFINING OR NON-DEFINING?

1. London, which is the capital of England, is one of the largest cities in the world. [ ]
2. This is the dress my mother has made for me. [ ]
3. Queen Elizabeth II, who is 83, has been the queen of England for 57 years now. [ ]

4. That's the dog that bit me. [ ]
5. Tom Cruise, who has starred a lot of films, is a famous American actor. [ ]
6. The village where I grew up is very small. [ ]
7. Greg, whose job involves travelling a lot, has been in nearly all the countries in the world. [ ]
8. The office I have just rented is near my home. [ ]
9. This is the officer that arrested the burglar. [ ]
10. Lady Gaga, who is a well-known pop star, is only 24 [ ]

F) WRITE THE RIGHT RELATIVE PRONOUN TO COMPLETE THESE SENTENCES.

1. Jim, [ ] I've known for years, is my best friend.
2. My new coat, [ ] I bought in New York, is very warm and comfortable.
3. My boss, [ ] wife is French, travels to Paris regularly.
4. He didn't even say "thank you", [ ] I found really rude.
5. Next summer I'm going to India, [ ] I've never been before.
6. My sister, [ ] is five years younger than me, is a lawyer.
7. Galileo Galilei, [ ] supported the heliocentric theory, was arrested by the Inquisition.

G) JOIN THESE SENTENCES USING RELATIVE PRONOUNS BEGINNING WITH THE WORDS GIVEN. OMIT THE PRONOUN IF POSSIBLE. ADD COMMAS IF NECESSARY.

1. My school is very big. It is in Madrid. My school is very big.
2. Robert Pattinson is an actor. He plays Edward Cullen in the Twilight saga. Robert Pattinson is