

English Grammar - Relative Clauses

We use relative clauses to provide more information about something, somewhere or somebody. We combine two phrases using a relative pronoun.

Example:

A question: Do you know **the girl?** (*Which girl?*)
More information: Do you know **the girl who is talking with Tom?**
(*relative clause = "who is talking with Tom"*)

Relative Pronouns (*which, where, who, whose*)

1) Which (= "que") (*used for objects*)

This is used to provide more information about animals and things.

Ex: This is the book **which** I wrote.
My dog, **which** is usually very active, is sleeping now.

2) Where (= "onde") (*used for places*)

This is used to provide more information about places.

Ex: London is the city **where** I was born.
Pilarzinho is the neighborhood **where** I live.

3) Who (= "que") (*used for people*)

This is used to provide more information about people.

Ex: This is the boy **who** lives opposite my house.
That is the man **who** speaks 10 languages.

4) Whose (= "cujo(a)(s)") (*used for characteristics*)

This is used to provide characteristics about people, places or things.

Ex: This is the boy **whose** father is a politician.
That is the restaurant **whose** pizzas are gluten-free.

Note:

For "**which**" and "**who**", the word "**that**" can be a substitute.

Ex: This is the book **that** I wrote.
This is the boy **that** lives opposite my house.

Suggested videos: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZGeLzglKQ0> (16 mins)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j25CFx-4g0I> (16 mins)

Exercise 1. Choose “which”, “who”, “where” or “whose”.

1. Do you know the Chinese people _____ we saw at the party?
2. I don't know _____ the party will be!
3. I'll take the bus _____ arrives first.
4. The boy, _____ parents are Italian, is my new friend.
5. This is the school _____ I studied when I was young.
6. Do you remember the famous blues and jazz singer _____ was blind?
7. My son, _____ is very smart, never lets me down.
8. Do you know the man _____ house is opposite mine?
9. Namibia, _____ she was born, is her favorite vacation destination.
10. Lying, something _____ I never do, really irritates me!
11. I want to meet a girl _____ family is rich!
12. *In a pet shop:* I want to have the dog _____ is sleeping in the corner.

Exercise 2. Repeat Exercise 1, changing “which” and “who” to “that”.

More exercises:

https://www.englisch-hilfen.de/en/exercises/pronouns/relative_pronouns.htm

<https://www.english-4u.de/en/grammar-exercises/relative-pronouns.htm>

<https://english.lingolia.com/en/grammar/pronouns/relative-pronouns/exercises>

English Grammar – “Difficult to understand” Relative Clauses

In English, a relative clause can use a linking word such as “which”, “who”, “where”, “whose” or “that” (relative pronouns). Sometimes, the relative pronoun is optional. Unfortunately, for non-native speakers, the absence of the word can cause difficulty or even confusion.

Here are some examples:

- 1) The cotton clothing is usually made of grows in Mississippi.
- 2) The fat people eat accumulates.

If you think that these sentences are difficult to understand, then you are not alone! Let’s now insert a relative pronoun and some commas:

- 1) The cotton, **which** clothing is usually made of, grows in Mississippi.
- 2) The fat, **which** people eat, accumulates.

or:

- 1) The cotton, **that** clothing is usually made of, grows in Mississippi.
- 2) The fat, **that** people eat, accumulates

They are now much easier to understand!

Exercise 2. Insert the word “that” in the following sentences, in the correct places, to make them easier to understand:

- 1) The bottom line is there are rules you have to follow.
- 2) We've always said personal shoppers are the secret to our pickup and delivery success.
- 3) Walmart executives noted in a recent document they plan to expand their micro-fulfillment test to Texas.
- 4) A graphic included in Walmart's blog post indicates these will be drive-up kiosks.