

## ***Defining Relative Clauses***

The information provided in a defining relative clause is crucial in understanding the meaning of the sentence.

**Example:** *The woman who lives in apartment No. 34 has been arrested.*  
*The document that I need has 'important' written at the top.*

The purpose of a defining relative clause is to clearly define who or what we are talking about. Without this information, it would be difficult to know who or what is meant.

**Example:** *The house is being renovated.*

In this case it is not necessarily clear *which* house is being renovated.

## ***Non-defining Relative Clauses***

Non-defining relative clauses provide interesting additional information which is not essential to understanding the meaning of the sentence.

**Example:** *Mrs. Jackson, who is very intelligent, lives on the corner.*

Correct punctuation is essential in non-defining relative clauses. If the non-defining relative clause occurs in the middle of a sentence, a comma is put before the relative pronoun and at the end of the clause. If the non-defining relative clause occurs at the end of a sentence, a comma is put before the relative pronoun.

**NOTE:** In defining relative clauses there are no commas.

## **How To Use A Relative Clause - The Use of Relative Pronouns in Defining Clauses**

### **Relative Pronouns in Defining Relative Clauses**

	Person	Object
<b>Subject</b>	who that	<i>which, that</i>
<b>Object</b>	Ø, that, who, whom	Ø, <i>which, that</i>
<b>Possessive</b>	whose	<i>whose, of which</i>

### ***Relative Pronouns Used As The Subject of Defining Relative Clauses***

**Example:** *Children who (that) play with fire are in great danger of harm.*  
*The man who bought all the books by Hemingway has died.*

Generally, **who** and **which** are more usual in written English whereas **that** is more usual in speech when referring to things.

### ***Relative Pronouns Used As The Object of Defining Relative Clauses***

**Example:** *That's the boy (Ø, that, who, whom) I invited to the party.*  
*There's the house (Ø, that, which) I'd like to buy.*

## Relative Pronouns Used As A Possessive In A Defining Relative Clauses

**Example:** *He's the man whose car was stolen last week.*

*They were sure to visit the town whose location (OR the location of which) was little known.*

**NOTE:** It is preferable to use **that** (not **which**) after the following words: all, any(thing), every (thing), few, little, many, much, no(thing), none, some(thing), and after superlatives. When using the pronoun to refer to the object, **that** can be omitted.

**Example:** *It was everything (that) he had ever wanted.*

*There were only a few (that) really interested him.*

## How To Use A Relative Clause - The Use of Relative Pronouns in Non-Defining Relative Clauses

### Relative Pronouns in Non-Defining Relative Clauses

	Person	Object
Subject	who	which
Object	who, whom	which
Possessive	whose	whose, of which

### Relative Pronouns Used As The Subject of Non-Defining Relative Clauses

**Example:** *Frank Zappa, who was one of the most creative artists in rock 'n roll, came from California.*

*Olympia, whose name is taken from the Greek, is the capitol of Washington State.*

### Relative Pronouns Used As The Object of Non-Defining Relative Clauses

**Example:** *Frank invited Janet, who (whom) he had met in Japan, to the party.*

*Peter brought his favorite antique book, which he had found at a flea market, to show his friends.*

NOTE That can never be used in non-defining clauses.

### Relative Pronouns Used As A Possessive In Non-Defining Relative Clauses

**Example:** *The singer, whose most recent recording has had much success, signing autographs.*

*The artist, whose name he could not remember, was one of the best he had ever seen.*

### NOTES

In non-defining relative clauses, **which** can be used to refer to an entire clause.

**Example:** *He came for the weekend wearing only some shorts and a t-shirt, which was a stupid thing to do.*

After numbers and words like **many, most, neither, and some**, we use **of** before **whom** and **which** in non-defining relative clauses. **Example:** *Many of those people, most of whom enjoyed their experience, spent at least a year abroad.* Dozens of people had been invited, most of whom I knew.