

An Upper-Intermediate Grammar Worksheet from Anna Grammar™

A relative clause combines two sentences, the second sentence describing a noun in the first sentence. A relative pronoun (e.g. who, that) is used to replace the noun.

First Sentence: *The boy had meningitis.*

Second Sentence: *The boy has gone home today.*

Combined: *The boy who had meningitis has gone home today.*

Relative clauses help us understand which thing is being talked about. They can give us extra information about something.

A **defining relative clause** is one which identifies a noun.

This kind of clause defines who or what we are talking about rather than giving extra information about the person or thing.

There are **no** commas at the beginning or ending of a defining relative clause.

First Sentence: *The consultant disagreed with my diagnosis last week.*

Second Sentence: *The consultant has resigned.*

Combined: *The consultant who disagreed with my diagnosis has resigned.*

A **non-defining relative clause** is used to give added information about a noun. It follows a noun, but we are already clear about the noun itself (i.e. it has already been identified) so the clause then is not essential in the sentence.

If we removed the non-defining clause from the sentence, the sentence is still complete.

A non-defining relative clause has a relative pronoun which can **never** be left out and is separated from the noun with commas.

First Sentence: *Chris has worked with me for the last five years.*

Second Sentence: *Chris is a faithful friend.*

Combined: *Chris, who has worked with me for the last five years, is a faithful friend.*

Who is used to refer to people. It is used instead of he/she or they.

My best friend who lives in Manchester is a surgeon.

That can be used instead of who*. * But that can't be used instead of who in a non-defining clause.

My best friend, who adores French fashion, is going to Paris next week.

NOT *My best friend, that adores French fashion, is going to Paris next week.*

That or **which** is used to refer to things. That is more commonly used than which.*

The chair that Ricky Martin once sat on has been sent away for repairs.

However, **that** can't be used instead of **which** in a non-defining clause.

I've been practicing my Italian, which I'm doing at nightschool. **NOT** *I've been practicing my Italian, that I'm doing at nightschool.*

We can omit **who/that/which** when it is not the subject of a relative clause.

The receptionist (who) I chose for the job is doing really well.

The sheets (that) I bought go perfectly with this duvet cover.

When **who/that/which** is the subject of a relative clause, it can **not** be left out.

The doctor who is the head of this department will examine her tomorrow.

The cat that broke its leg goes home tomorrow.

Where refers to places.

The restaurant where we first met is being renovated.

Whose is used instead of his/her or their.

I met a man whose car was stolen last week.

Whom is sometimes used instead of who when it is the object of the verb in a relative clause.

*The receptionist whom I talked to on the phone last time has gone home.**

*Whom makes this more formal. Who is now more common in conversational English

*The receptionist who I talked to on the phone last time has gone home.**



Exercise 1

Choose a pronoun to go in these sentences from the options. In some sentences more than one pronoun is possible.

1. I am reading an article, **that/which** was written last year, about euthanasia.
2. The nurse **who/that** bandaged my arm was very unfriendly.
3. Dr. Black, **who/that** drives a red SUV, isn't here today.
4. I'd like to see the doctor **who/that** supports using holistic medicine.
5. My doctor, **who/that** has just got back from holiday, will see us in five minutes.



Exercise 2

Combine the sentences with a relative clause. Use the word prompt as the beginning of the sentence.

(If the relative pronoun can be left out, then omit it.)

1. I was hunting for a key all morning. I have just found it. ➔ *I have just found...*
2. She showed me the coat. She had just bought the coat. ➔ *She showed...*
3. My friend lives in White Street. White Street is a pretty little street. ➔ *My friend...*
4. My car is painted red. My car is being serviced. ➔ *My car...*
5. What is the name of the doctor? You talked to that doctor last time. ➔ *What is the...*



Answer Key:

Exercise 1: Answers

1. which, 2. who/that are both possible, 3. who, 4. who/that are both possible, 5. who.

Exercise 2: Sample Answers

1. I have just found the key that/which I was hunting for all morning.
2. She showed me the coat she had just bought.
3. My friend lives in White Street, which is a pretty little street.
4. My car, which is painted red, is being serviced.
5. What is the name of the doctor you talked to last time?