

## Relative clauses (1) – clauses with **who/that/which**

Look at this example sentence:

The woman who lives next door is a doctor.  
└────────── relative clause ─────────┘

A *clause* is a part of a sentence. A *relative clause* tells us which person or thing (or what kind of person or thing) the speaker means:

- The woman **who lives next door**... ('who lives next door' tells us which woman)
- People **who live in London**... ('who live in London' tells us what kind of people)

We use **who** in a relative clause when we are talking about *people* (not things). We use **who** instead of **he/she/they**:

the woman – she lives next door – is a doctor  
↓  
→ The woman **who** lives next door is a doctor.

we know a lot of people – they live in London  
↓  
→ We know a lot of people **who** live in London.

- An architect is someone **who designs buildings**.
- What was the name of the man **who lent you the money**?
- Anyone **who wants to do the exam** must enter before next Friday.

You can also use **that** (instead of **who**):

- The man **that lives next door** is very friendly.

But sometimes you must use **who** (not 'that') for people

When we are talking about *things*, we use **that** or **which** (not 'who') in a relative clause:

where is the cheese? – it was in the fridge  
↓  
→ Where is the cheese { that  
which } was in the fridge?

- I don't like stories **that have unhappy endings**. (or ...stories **which** have...)
- Barbara works for a company **that makes washing machines**. (or ...a company **which** makes...)
- The machine **that broke down** has now been repaired. (or The machine **which** broke down...)

1 In this exercise you have to explain what some words mean. Choose the right meaning from the box and then write a sentence with who. Use a dictionary if necessary.

he/she	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>steals from a shop</li> <li><del>designs buildings</del></li> <li>doesn't believe in God</li> <li>is not brave</li> </ul>	he/she	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>buys something from a shop</li> <li>pays rent to live in a house or flat</li> <li>breaks into a house to steal things</li> <li>no longer works and gets money from the state</li> </ul>
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- 1 (an architect) ... An architect is someone who designs buildings.
- 2 (a burglar) A burglar is someone .....
- 3 (a customer) .....
- 4 (a shoplifter) .....
- 5 (a coward) .....
- 6 (an atheist) .....
- 7 (a pensioner) .....
- 8 (a tenant) .....

Complete the sentences. Choose the most suitable ending from the box and make it into a relative clause.

he invented the telephone	<del>it makes washing machines</del>
she runs away from home	it gives you the meaning of words
they are never on time	it won the race
they stole my car	it can support life
they were on the wall	it cannot be explained

- 1 Barbara works for a company ... that makes washing machines.
- 2 The book is about a girl .....
- 3 What was the name of the horse .....?
- 4 The police have caught the men .....
- 5 Alexander Bell was the man .....
- 6 What's happened to the pictures .....?
- 7 A mystery is something .....
- 8 A dictionary is a book .....
- 9 I don't like people .....
- 10 It seems that Earth is the only planet .....

## Relative clauses (2) – clauses with or without **who/that/which**

A

Look again at these example sentences

- The woman **who** lives next door is a doctor. (or The woman that lives...)  
The woman lives next door. **who** (= the woman) is the *subject*
- Where is the cheese **that** was in the fridge? (or ...the cheese which was...)  
The cheese was in the fridge. **that** (= the cheese) is the *subject*

You must use **who/that/which** when it is the subject of the relative clause. You cannot say 'The woman lives next door is a doctor' or 'Where is the cheese was in the fridge?'

B

Sometimes **who/that/which** is the *object* of the verb. For example:

- The woman **who** I wanted to see was away on holiday.  
I wanted to see **the woman**. **who** (= the woman) is the *object*  
I is the *subject*
- Have you found the keys **that** you lost?  
You lost **the keys**. **that** (= the keys) is the *object*.  
you is the *subject*

When **who/that/which** is the object, you can leave it out. So you can say:

- The woman I wanted to see was away. or The woman **who** I wanted to see...
- Have you found the keys you lost? or ...the keys **that** you lost?
- The dress Ann bought doesn't fit her very well. or The dress **that** Ann bought...
- Is there anything I can do? or ...anything **that** I can do?

Note that we say:

the keys you lost (not 'the keys you lost *them*')    the dress Ann bought (not 'bought *it*')

## EXERCISES

1 In some of these sentences you don't need **who** or **that**. If you don't need these words, put them in brackets like this: (**who**) (**that**).

- 1 The woman **who** lives next door is a doctor. ('who' is necessary in this sentence)
- 2 Have you found the keys (**that**) you lost. (in this sentence you don't need 'that')
- 3 The people **who** we met at the party were very friendly.
- 4 The people **who** work in the office are very friendly.
- 5 The people **who** I talked to were very friendly.
- 6 What have you done with the money **that** I gave you?
- 7 What happened to the money **that** was on the table? Did you take it?
- 8 It was an awful film. It was the worst film **that** I've ever seen.
- 9 It was an awful experience. It was the worst thing **that** has ever happened to me.

2 Complete these sentences with a relative clause. Use the sentences in the box to make your relative clauses.

we hired a car	you're going to see a film	I invited some people to the party
Ann is wearing a dress	you had to do some work	Tom recommended a hotel to us
<del>you lost some keys</del>	we wanted to visit a museum	

- 1 Have you found the keys ... ~~you lost?~~ ...
- 2 I like the dress .....
- 3 The museum ..... was shut when we got there.
- 4 What's the name of the film .....?
- 5 Some of the people ..... couldn't come.
- 6 Have you finished the work .....?
- 7 The car ..... broke down after a few miles.
- 8 We stayed at a hotel .....

3

3 Complete each sentence using **who/whom/whose/where**.

- 1 What's the name of the man **whose** car you borrowed?
- 2 A cemetery is a place ..... people are buried.
- 3 A pacifist is a person ..... believes that all wars are wrong.
- 4 An orphan is a child ..... parents are dead.
- 5 The place ..... we spent our holidays was really beautiful.
- 6 This school is only for children ..... first language is not English.
- 7 I don't know the name of the woman to ..... I spoke on the phone.

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## Relative clauses (3) – whose/whom/where

### A Whose

We use **whose** in relative clauses instead of **his/her/their**:

we saw some people – **their** car had broken down  
→ We saw some people **whose** car had broken down.

We use **whose** mostly for people:

- A widow is a woman **whose** husband is dead. (her husband is dead)
- What's the name of the man **whose** car you borrowed? (you borrowed his car)
- A few days ago I met someone **whose** brother I went to school with. (I went to school with his/her brother)

Compare **who** and **whose**:

- I met a man **who** knows you. (*he* knows you)
- I met a man **whose** sister knows you. (*his* sister knows you)

### B Whom

**Whom** is possible instead of **who** when it is the *object* of the verb in the relative clause (like the sentences in Unit 92B):

- The woman **whom** I wanted to see was away on holiday. (I wanted to see her)

You can also use **whom** with a preposition (to whom / from whom / with whom etc.):

- The woman **with** whom he fell in love left him after a few weeks. (he fell in love with her)

But we do not often use **whom**. In spoken English we usually prefer **who** or **that**, or nothing (see Unit 92). So we usually say:

- The man I saw... or The man **who/that** I saw...
- The woman he fell in love with... or The woman **who/that** he fell in love with...

### C Where







You can use **where** in a relative clause to talk about a place:

the hotel – we stayed **there** – wasn't very clean  
→ The hotel **where** we stayed wasn't very clean.

I recently went back to the town where I was born. (or ...the town I was born in.  
or ...the town that I was born in.)

I would like to live in a country where there is plenty of sunshine.

1 You met these people at a party:

1  My mother writes detective stories.	2  My wife is an English teacher.	3  I own a restaurant.
4  My ambition is to climb Everest.	5  We've just got married.	6  My parents used to work in a circus.

Later you tell a friend about the people you met. Complete the sentences using who... or whose...

- I met somebody whose mother writes detective stories.
- I met a man .....
- I met a woman .....
- I met somebody .....
- I met a couple .....
- I met somebody .....

2 Complete the sentences. Use the sentences in the box to make relative clauses with where.

I can buy some postcards there	<del>I was born there</del>
Ann bought a dress there	we can have a really good meal there
John is staying there	we had the car repaired there

- I recently went back to the town where I was born.
- Do you know a restaurant .....
- Is there a shop near here .....
- I can't remember the name of the garage .....
- Do you know the name of the hotel .....
- Ann bought a dress which didn't fit her, so she took it back to the shop .....

3 Complete each sentence using who/whom/whose/where.

- What's the name of the man whose car you borrowed?
- A cemetery is a place ..... people are buried.
- A pacifist is a person ..... believes that all wars are wrong.
- An orphan is a child ..... parents are dead.
- The place ..... we spent our holidays was really beautiful.
- This school is only for children ..... first language is not English.
- I don't know the name of the woman to ..... I spoke on the phone.

4 Use your own ideas to complete these sentences. They are like the ones in Sections D and E.

- I'll always remember the day I first met you.
- I'll never forget the time .....
- The reason ..... was that I didn't know your address.
- Unfortunately I wasn't at home the evening .....
- The reason ..... is that they don't need one.
- 1989 was the year .....

# Relative clauses (4) – ‘extra information’ clauses (1)

There are two types of relative clause. In these examples, the relative clauses are underlined. Compare:

## Type 1

- The woman who lives next door is a doctor.
- Barbara works for a company that makes washing machines.
- We stayed at the hotel (that) Ann recommended to us.

In these examples, the relative clause tells you *which* person or thing (or *what kind* of person or thing) the speaker means:

‘The woman *who lives next door*’ tells us *which* woman.

‘A company *that makes washing machines*’ tells us *what kind* of company.

‘The hotel *(that) Ann recommended*’ tells us *which* hotel.

We do not use commas (,) with these clauses:

- We know a lot of people who live in London. (*what kind* of people)

## Type 2

- My brother Jim, who lives in London, is a doctor.
- Colin told me about his new job, which he’s enjoying very much.
- We stayed at the Grand Hotel, which Ann recommended to us.

In these examples, the relative clauses do *not* tell you which person or thing the speaker means. We *already know* which thing or person is meant: ‘My brother Jim’, ‘Colin’s new job’ and ‘the Grand Hotel’.

The relative clauses in these sentences give us *extra information* about the person or thing.

We use commas (,) in these clauses:

- My brother Jim, who lives in London, is a doctor. (*extra information* about Jim)

In both types of relative clause we use **who** for people and **which** for things. But:

## Type 1

You can use **that**:

- Do you know anyone who/that speaks French and Italian?
- Barbara works for a company which/that makes washing machines.

You can leave out **that/who/which** when it is the object (see Unit 92):

- We stayed at the hotel (that/which) Ann recommended.
- This morning I met somebody (that/who) I hadn’t seen for ages.

We do not often use **whom** in this type of clause (see Unit 93B).

## Type 2

You cannot use **that**:

- John, who (not ‘that’) speaks French and Italian, works as a tourist guide.
- Colin told me about his new job, which (not ‘that’) he’s enjoying very much.

You cannot leave out **who** or **which**:

- We stayed at the Grand Hotel, which Ann recommended to us.

You can use **whom** (when it is the object):

- This morning I met Diane, whom (or who) I hadn’t seen for ages.

In both types of relative clause you can use **whose** and **where**:

- We met some people whose car had broken down.
- What’s the name of the place where you spent your holiday?
- Amy, whose car had broken down, was in a very bad mood.
- Mrs Bond is going to spend a few weeks in Sweden, where her daughter lives.

Make one sentence from two. Use the sentence in brackets to make a relative clause (Type 2). Sometimes the clause goes in the middle of the sentence, sometimes at the end. You will need to use who(m)/whose/which/where.

- 1 Ann is very friendly. (She lives next door.) ... Ann, who lives next door, is very friendly...
- 2 We stayed at the Grand Hotel. (Ann recommended it to us.)  
... We stayed at the Grand Hotel, which Ann recommended to us, ...
- 3 We went to Sandra's party. (We enjoyed it very much.)  
We went to Sandra's party, .....
- 4 I went to see the doctor. (He told me to rest for a few days.)  
.....
- 5 John is one of my closest friends. (I have known him for a very long time.)  
John .....
- 6 Sheila is away from home a lot. (Her job involves a lot of travelling.)  
.....
- 7 The new stadium will be opened next month. (It can hold 90,000 people.)  
The .....
- 8 We often go to visit our friends in Bristol. (It is only 30 miles away.)  
.....
- 9 Glasgow is the largest city in Scotland. (My brother lives there.)  
.....



3 In some of these sentences you can use **which** or **that**; in others, only **which** is possible. Cross out **that** if only **which** is possible. Also, put commas (,) where necessary.

- 1 Jane works for a company which / that makes shoes. (both possible, no commas)
- 2 Colin told me about his new job , which / ~~that~~ he's enjoying very much. (only which is possible; comma necessary)
- 3 My office which / that is on the second floor of the building is very small.
- 4 The office which / that I'm using at the moment is very small.
- 5 She told me her address which / that I wrote down on a piece of paper.
- 6 There are some words which / that are very difficult to translate.
- 7 The sun which / that is one of millions of stars in the universe provides us with heat and light.

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