

# Relatives

## Relative Pronouns and Relative Clauses

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Relative pronouns are words which are used to link two sentences or clauses that may have the same noun or pronoun. Relative pronouns are used to introduce relative clauses.

Rajani is the girl **who** escorted the Vice President to his seat.

Relative      Relative Clause  
Pronoun

This is the house **that** I bought.

Relative      Relative  
Pronoun      Clause

### Types of Relative Pronouns

- Who
- Whom
- That
- Which
- Whose

#### Who

It is used to refer to the animate noun of the sentence. The noun in such cases is usually a person. The pronoun 'who' is used to refer to the doer of the action. In other words, it is used to refer to the subject.

1. This is the man **who** repairs computers.

Relative      Relative Clause  
Pronoun

**Who** repairs computers?  
**The man**

2. Krishna is the grocer **who** refused to return the change.

Relative      Relative Clause  
Pronoun

**Who** refused to return the change?  
**Krishna**

## Whom

It is used to refer to the animate noun of the sentence. The noun in such cases is usually a person. 'Whom' is used to refer to the person who receives the action. In other words, it is used to refer to the object.

1. Van Gogh was the artist **whom** they dismissed as talentless.

Relative      Relative Clause  
Pronoun

Whom did they dismiss as talentless?

**Van Gogh**

2. Dinesh is the one **whom** Akshay accused of stealing.

Relative      Relative Clause  
Pronoun

Whom did Akshay accuse of stealing?

**Dinesh**

## That

It is used for referring to both animate and inanimate nouns.

1. He purchased the car **that** I wanted to sell.

Relative      Relative Clause  
Pronoun

2. This is the dog **that** I saw in the park.

Relative      Relative clause  
Pronoun

## Which

It is used to refer to inanimate nouns.

1. This is the book, **which** my cousin told me about.

Relative    Relative Clause  
Pronoun

2. The glass, **which** is filled up to the brim, has fallen down.

Relative    Relative Clause  
Pronoun

In most cases, 'that' and 'which' are interchangeable. However, in formal usage, both have specific uses. 'That' and 'which' are used when the accompanying clause is crucial to the sentence. Removal of 'which' would render the sentence incomplete.

1. This is the boat that/which the fishermen found.

This is the boat.

The pronoun 'which' can also be used to introduce a modifying clause that is not crucial to the sentence. It is separated from the rest of the sentence with the help of two commas. Removal of the clause will not effect any change in the meaning of the sentence.

2. The notebook, ~~which was kept on the table~~, was ripped to pieces by the pups.

The notebook was ripped to pieces by the pups.

## Whose

It is used to indicate possession by an animate noun or the pronoun.

This is my aunt Manjula **whose** house I live in.

Relative    Relative Clause  
Pronoun

This is the person **whose** phone I used.

Relative    Relative Clause  
Pronoun

|                   | Subject | Object | Possessive |
|-------------------|---------|--------|------------|
| Animate (People)  | Who     | Whom   | Whose      |
| Inanimate(things) | That    | That   | Of which   |

## Relative Adverbs

Some adverbs can function like relative pronouns.

- When
- Where
- Why

### When

It is used instead of the phrase 'in/on which'.

Those were the days **when** I had a lot of free time.

Relative    Relative Clause  
Pronoun

It was a time **when** nature was conducive to mankind.

Relative    Relative Clause  
Pronoun

### Where

It is used instead of the phrase 'at/on which'.

Mr Silas was laid to rest **where** the rest of his family was buried.

Relative    Relative Clause  
Pronoun

Rajiv stayed in the same hotel **where** we did a year ago.

Relative    Relative Clause  
Pronoun

## Why

It is used to replace the phrase 'for which'.

This is the reason **why** students are stressed these days.

Relative    Relative Clause  
Pronoun

Orthodoxy is the reason **why** they suspect western medicine.

Relative    Relative Clause  
Pronoun

## Relative Clauses

Relative clauses are those that are introduced by a relative pronoun.

Krishna is the grocer who refused to return the change.

This is the house that has been booked by the Mehtas.

The dog which has a red collar is the neighbour's pet Ginger.

The place, where I parked my car, is close to the shopping complex.

## Types of Relative Clauses

- Restrictive relative clause
- Non-restrictive relative clause

**Restrictive relative clause:** It is a clause which describes the preceding noun in manner that distinguishes it from the rest of its kind. The clause is not separated from the rest of the sentence with commas.

This is the boy who robbed you yesterday.

My cousin Madhu who lives in China arrived for my sister's wedding.

The book that you saw on my table yesterday is a gift.

**Non-restrictive relative clause:** It is a clause which is placed after the noun that is already defined. The clause only provides additional information which is not important to the sentence. It is separated from the rest of the sentence with the help of commas.

The hat, which Aunt Gertrude gifted me, is missing.  
Manjeet, who is known for his culinary skills, cooked a delicious meal.  
Mr Rao, whom I worked for in the 70s, lives in this building.

