

## RELATIVE CLAUSES.

### MORPHOLOGY OF RELATIVE PRONOUNS

	PEOPLE	THINGS
<b>SUBJECT</b>	WHO/THAT	WHICH/THAT
<b>OBJECT</b>	WHOM/WHO/THAT	WHICH/THAT
<b>NOUN COMPLEMENT</b>	WHOSE	OF WHICH/WHOSE

### DEFINING RELATIVE CLAUSES.

*A conductor is a person who collects fares on bus or tram.*

*A doctor is a person who has been trained in medical science.*

*A liar is a person who habitually tells lies.*

If we omit the words in italics, we learn only that a conductor is a person, a doctor is a person, and a liar is a person. We would clearly regard such explanations as unsatisfactory, even though as sentences they are grammatically complete. The persons are defined, or distinguished from each other by the relative clauses in italics: the relative clauses are defining.

The definition of conductor is no longer simply a person, but a person who collects on a bus or tram. The relative clause is an essential of the whole definition, and cannot be omitted if the sentence as a whole is to make useful sense. Similarly, it would be impossible to answer the following question without the defining relative clause in italics:

*What do we call a person who habitually tells lies?*

The answer is of course:

*A person who habitually tells lies is called a liar.*

Again the answer would be incomplete without the defining relative clause in italics. The subject of the sentence is no longer simply "a person", but "a person who habitually tells lies".

All these examples show that the defining relative clauses provide an indispensable definition of the word "person" (called the antecedent -the word to which the relative clause

relates). They are not separated from the antecedent by commas in writing, nor by a pause in speech. This is a basic feature of all defining relative clauses.

The relative pronoun that is used only in defining clauses, and can refer to persons or things. Who for persons and which for things may be used instead:

*I dislike women THAT chatter incessantly.*

*I dislike women WHO chatter incessantly.*

*Old age is a problem WHICH should concern us all.*

*Old age is a problem THAT should concern us all.*

All the relative clauses here are defining: there are no commas between the antecedents (and no pauses in speech). Students will find it instructive to note examples of usage in modern written English, in order to see what pattern of choice emerges in such clauses (i.e. that or who, that or which).

With regard to the choice of THAT or WHO, both are equally appropriate if the antecedent is a vague or generalized noun or pronoun:

*He's the sort of man that/who will do anything to help people in trouble.*

*I need someone that/who can do the work quickly.*

If, however, the antecedent is more definite or particularized, WHO is far more likely choice:

*The aunt who came to see us last week is my father's sister.*

With antecedents denoting things, the choice of THAT or WHICH seems more a matter of individual taste; but there are a few cases where THAT is preferred to WHICH:

a. When the antecedent is an indefinite pronoun:

*The Government has promised to do ALL that lies in its power to alleviate the hardships of those made homeless by the floods.*

b. When the antecedent is qualified by a superlative:

*This is the FUNNIEST film that has ever come from Ealing Studios.*

c. When the antecedent is qualified by an ordinal number:

*The FIRST statement that was issued by the press attaché at the palace gave very few details.*

d. When the antecedent is the complement of "to be":

*It's A BOOK that will be very popular.*

The problem of choosing the appropriate relative pronoun in defining relative clauses very often does not arise:

*The library didn't have the book (that or which) I wanted.*

This sentence consists of two clauses:

1. *The library didn't have the book (main clause)*
2. *(that or which) I wanted (relative clause)*

The relative clause tells us which book the library didn't have; it defines the antecedent book; it is a defining relative clause. We may analyze the relative clause thus:

*that or which (object) I (subject) wanted (verb)*

It is a distinctive characteristic of defining relative clauses that the relative pronoun may be omitted, without any change of meaning in the sentence as a whole, when it is not the SUBJECT of the relative clause. It not only may be omitted, it very often is, particularly in spoken English:

*The library didn't have the book I wanted.*

The same is true of whom in a defining relative clause -it is very often omitted:

*Was the man you spoke to just now a friend of yours?*

Such clauses are called "contact clauses", and are very common in both speech and writing, as students will soon realize if they examine the constructions they themselves use.

### NON-DEFINING RELATIVE CLAUSES

*The Victoria Line, which was opened in 1969, was London's first complete new tube for 60 years.*

If we omit the relative clause, we are left with the statement "The Victoria Line was London's first complete new line tube for 60 years". The relative clause gives additional information about the antecedent, but does not define it: the "Line" in question is already sufficiently defined by "Victoria".

The relative clause is in this case called non-defining (or parenthetical), and is enclosed by commas. Whether we include the clause or not, the meaning of the main clause remains exactly the same. In fact, the main clause and relative clause could be presented as two separated statements:

*The Victoria Line was London's first complete new tube for 60 years.  
It was opened in March 1969.*

The relative clause could even be represented by an independent clause in parenthesis. In this case, it is clearly seen as incidental information, mentioned "by the way":

*The Victoria Line (it was opened in March 1969) was London's first complete new tube for 60 years.*

The omission or insertion of commas may represent a difference in meaning between two otherwise identical sentences:

- a. *He has a sister who works at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva.*
- b. *He has a sister, who works at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva. (non-defining)*

The absence of comma after sister in a implies that "he" has more than one sister; that one of them in particular is being referred to -the one who works in Geneva. The presence of a comma in b implies that "he" has only one sister (it is therefore, impossible to define which one), and the relative clause simply gives more information about her.

A further point of contrast between defining and non-defining clauses is that the relative pronoun cannot be omitted in non-defining relative clauses, even if it is not the subject of its clause.

## WHOSE

Whose is the only possessive form of relative pronoun in English, and is used to refer to both persons and things. It is nearly always preferred to the prepositional construction of whom and is also often preferred to of which:

- a. *The man whose coat had been stolen immediately reported the theft. (Defining)*
- b. *The damaged ship, whose crew has now been taken off, was listing dangerously when last seen. (Non-defining)*

## PREPOSITIONAL RELATIVE CLAUSES

### 1. Defining relative clauses.

When the relative pronoun is the object of a preposition in a defining relative clause, the preposition is often placed before the relative pronoun that:

- a. *Is this the book (that/which) you asked me for?*
- b. *This is the person (that/whom) I was telling you about.*
- c. *The police learned that the man (that/whom) they were looking for had been seen boarding a train at Euston.*

It is very unlikely that the alternative forms would be used in sentences a and b. The sentences would sound forced and unnatural. The alternative form is, however, possible in c, though it results in greater formality of style.

Two of the factors determining the placing of prepositions are:

1. Is the sentence spoken or written? If SPOKEN, the preposition is much more likely to come at the end of its clause. At the same time, this makes it possible to omit the relative pronoun.
2. Is the style formal or informal? If INFORMAL the preposition is likely to come at the end of its clause, even in written English.

There are however two other considerations, which concern the way in which the preposition functions:

3. Verb+preposition combinations such as put up with (=tolerate) represent new words whose meanings are independent of their constituent elements. The two elements (or three) are then inseparable, and the preposition must always follow the verb:

*The person (that/whom) he takes after is his mother.*  
*This is something (that/which) I refuse to put up with.*

4. The preposition may, on the other hand, represent part of a prepositional noun phrase, and be entirely independent of the verb in its clause. In this case, the preposition always precedes the relative pronoun:

*He signed an agreement. Under this agreement he would be entitled to a commission on sales.*

=*He signed an agreement under which he would be entitled to a commission on sales.*

## 2. Non-defining clauses.

In a non-defining relative clause, it is almost a general rule for a preposition to come before the relative pronoun:

*The new hospital, in which the Queen has taken a great personal interest, will be officially opened in March.*

One important exception is the verb+preposition combinations mentioned above:

*No one puts any faith in the Government's promises, which they have frequently gone back on in the past.*

## WHAT

Although what is classified as a relative pronoun, it is unhelpful to foreign students to associate it with the relative pronouns we have used so far. The most important difference to note about the use of what is that it never relates back to an antecedent. It introduces a noun clause, not an adjectival clause, and is equivalent in meaning to that which, the thing(s) which or something which.

a. *He got THE THING WHICH he wanted.*

b. *He got WHAT he wanted.*

## EXERCISES

**Fill the blanks with relative pronouns if necessary.**

1. Can you remember the girl\_\_\_\_\_showed you the way?
2. The dog\_\_\_\_\_we heard last night is a bulldog.
3. The friends\_\_\_\_\_you are living with phoned you yesterday.
4. The money\_\_\_\_\_we spend on magazines should be spent on books.
5. The doctor\_\_\_\_\_visited your mother is very famous.
6. Where is the library\_\_\_\_\_you borrowed those books from?
7. People\_\_\_\_\_live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.
8. The street\_\_\_\_\_leads to the school is being repaired.
9. Here is the man\_\_\_\_\_dog bit you.
10. I know somebody\_\_\_\_\_lives in the town where you were born.

11. The key \_\_\_\_\_ you were looking for was behind the cupboard.
12. The town \_\_\_\_\_ we've just passed through was completely destroyed during the war.
13. That's the poet \_\_\_\_\_ poems are so successful.
14. The plane \_\_\_\_\_ has just landed comes from Paris.
15. I had my passport in the case \_\_\_\_\_ I lost.
16. The chair \_\_\_\_\_ you are sitting on belonged to my grandmother.
17. The oranges \_\_\_\_\_ I bought yesterday aren't very good.
18. That's the toy \_\_\_\_\_ my son enjoys playing with.

**Combine each of these pairs of sentences so that the second becomes a non-defining relative clause.**

1. Our television set is always making funny noises. It cost us a lot of money.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Mr. Green is going to retire. His students like him very much.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. A history of the town will be published soon. People know nothing about it.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Picasso is known all over the world now. His paintings were not understood at first.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. The final exams happened to be very easy. I feared them too much.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. I'm going to visit Brazil. I don't know anything at all about it.  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. The storm damaged the lorry. Its driver is a friend of mine.  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. We couldn't climb that mountain. Its summit is always covered with snow.  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Juan speaks English very well. His mother is Swedish.  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Their story sounds incredible. It is true.  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. My uncle Tom will be arriving tomorrow. You've heard so much about him.  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. Sardines are very nourishing. They are cheap.  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. I met Arthur Jones. His book on sports sells very well.  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. John did most of the work. He is very clever.  
\_\_\_\_\_
15. Valery came home yesterday. It was a pleasant surprise.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Fill the blanks using THAT or WHAT if necessary.**

1. All \_\_\_\_\_ glitters is not gold.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ I was interested in were Russian stamps.
3. She is the best friend \_\_\_\_\_ I have.
4. That's all \_\_\_\_\_ I need to know.
5. There isn't much \_\_\_\_\_ can be done.
6. I didn't understand \_\_\_\_\_ you said.
7. There isn't anywhere \_\_\_\_\_ pleases her.
8. Everything \_\_\_\_\_ happened after the match was shameful.
9. Isn't it the song \_\_\_\_\_ won a prize last year?
10. It was a parrot \_\_\_\_\_ spoke to us.

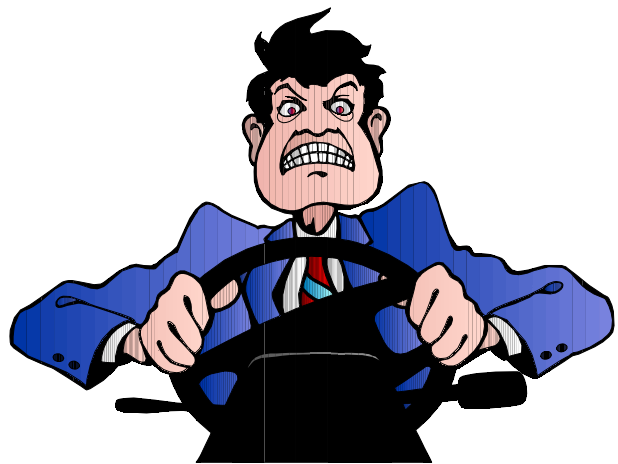
**Combine the following pair or groups of sentences, using relative pronouns.**

1. Tom had been driving all day. He was tired and wanted to stop.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Ann had been sleeping in the back of the car. She felt quite fresh and wanted to go on.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Paul wanted to take the mountain road. His tyres were nearly new.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Mary didn't know anything about mountains. She thought it would be quite safe to climb alone.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Jack's tyres were very old. He wanted to stick to the tarred road.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. He gave orders to his lieutenants. The lieutenants passed them on to the soldiers.  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. She said that the men were thieves. This turned out to be true.  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. The matter was reported to the Chief of Police. He ordered us all to be arrested.  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. In prison they fed us on dry bread. Most of it was mouldy.  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. We slept in the same room as a handcuffed prisoner. His handcuffs rattled every time he moved.  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. We lit a fire. It soon dried out our clothes.  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 
12. They rowed across the Atlantic. This had never been done before.
- 
13. The lorry crashed into a bus-load of schoolchildren. Six of them were slightly injured.
- 
14. She refuses to use machines. This makes her work more arduous.
- 
15. I met Mary. She asked me to give you this.
- 
16. The women prayed aloud all night. This kept us awake.
- 
17. The river bed is uneven and you may be in shallow water one moment and in deep water the next. This makes it unsafe for non swimmers.
- 
18. Mary said that there should be a notice up warning people. Mary's children couldn't swim.
- 
19. Ann said that there were far too many notices. Ann's children could swim very well.
- 
20. He paid me , 1 for cleaning ten windows. Most of them hadn't been cleaned for at least a year.
- 

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

*Comedy is, to my mind, the only thing worth writing in this despairing age, provided the comedy is truly on the side of the lonely, the neglected, the unsuccessful, and plays its part in the war against the imposing of an arbitrary code of behaviour upon individual and unpredictable human beings. There may, for all I know, be great and funny plays to be written about successful lawyers, brilliant criminals, wise schoolmasters, or families where children can grow up without silence and without regret. There are many plays that show that the law is always majestic or that family life is simple and easy to endure. Speaking for myself I am not on the side of such plays and the writer of comedy must choose his*



*side with particular care. He cannot afford to aim at the defenceless, nor can he, like the more serious writer, treat any character with contempt.*

*I use comedy because it is a better weapon than frontal attack. I want to give audiences the shock of recognition in which they see actors reflecting their own behaviour and laugh at it. I want to open their hearts. Normally they come along expecting to see something serious. But, as we know, life is not like that, and I don't force the two things apart. In any case it makes for surprise when you don't know what to expect next. There is the interaction between reality and illusion, circumstance pulling against fantasy. It gives you that feeling of your stomach turning over.*

John Mortimer.

## QUESTIONS

1. What is comedy for the writer?
2. Which side is comedy on?
3. Why does he use comedy?
4. Which is the intention of the writer?
5. Write down one of the comedies you have liked most and explain why.
6. Do you agree with John Mortimer? Why?
7. Give antonyms to:
  - Against:
  - Great:
  - Successful:
  - Life:
  - Comedy:

# We lost our hearts -but found each other!

Rosalynde and Chris have hearts that tell more than a love story

Rosalynde Lee  
laughed as she  
delivered a  
particularly punishing  
shot on the badminton  
court. Onlookers  
might have thought  
her cruel -she'd just  
thrashed her husband

Chris- but Ros  
couldn't hide her joy.  
Because it's not long  
since she was at  
death's door.  
I didn't even  
know if I'd live, let  
alone fall in love and  
marry, she says. ATo

play sport with my  
husband is a dream  
come true.®  
Ros was only  
21 when , in 1993,  
doctors found she had  
cardiomyopathy, a  
heart illness caused by  
a virus. AId been

feeling very weak and  
sick, she says. ABut it  
was a shock when the  
doctors said my only  
chance was to have a  
heart transplant. It's  
not what you expect at  
that age.®  
Luckily, a

## RELATIVE CLAUSES

suitable match was found within a month, and after three weeks

*I knew  
Chris was  
the one for  
me*

Ros still had to have regular check-ups at hospital. And it was at one of these that she met Chris, the man she was to marry.

AI was waiting to see the doctor when a man walked in, she says. AMost of the other heart patients were old, but he was young and handsome, with dark, wavy hair. I sneaked another look as he sat down beside me.

The man at Rosalynde's side was Chris Lee. Noticing her blushes, he broke the ice.

AI was amazed to see a pretty young woman at the clinic, says Chris, 31. AAnd we soon found out that we had a lot in common. Not only had we both had heart transplants, but we both live in Speke, near Liverpool, and had been very sporty before our operations.

AAAlthough my friends and family

in hospital, Ros was discharged with a new healthy heart.

Alt was really fantastic, she says. AFor the first time in had been very supportive, Chris was the first person who really understood what I'd been through, says Ros. AHe'd had his operation four years earlier for the same reason as me. He told me not to worry, and that I'd soon be doing everything I used to do.

AThe doctors had said it was safe to play sport again, but I hadn't been brave enough to try. With Chris's encouragement, I plucked up the courage to go swimming. That was when I really felt I'd recovered.

Ros accepted Chris's invitation to dinner, and looked forward to hearing more about how he'd got his life back together.

AChris had been so ill he'd had to learn to walk again, says Ros. ABut in just seven months, he'd gone from being 6stone weakling to a healthy 10 stone.

The couple's first date was a big hit. AChris and I joked a lot, recalls Ros.

months I could breathe easily. I was told it would be three months before I could play sport, but other than that, my life was AWe said things like, ALet's have a heart to heart, and laughed about the daft questions people ask us. One friend thought I'd become more masculine because I was given a man's heart! And we were both fed up with people asking to see our scars, although it was interesting to discover that even our scars were alike -both very neat.

Chris and Ros kept seeing each other regularly. They went to the cinema, or just for a walk in the park. AWe enjoy the simple things in life, says Chris. AAfter all, I was confined to a wheelchair for six months, so even walking gives me a

*Our lives  
are just  
beginning*

buzz.

Ros agrees: AWe don't let little things get us down - we're just glad to be alive. But it's not as if we talk about our conditions all the time

## MMLLDC

normal.

-quite the opposite, in fact. Other people worry about us so much, it's a relief to be with somebody who doesn't fret.

AMy mum insists on carrying my shopping and she wouldn't let me ride the rollercoaster when we visited a theme park. I've been told I'm out of danger, but that means nothing to Mum!

However, Ros and Chris do watch their diet. They both have to take medication to stop their bodies rejecting their hearts, and a stomach upset could make it ineffective. AWe don't eat eggs, cheese or seafood, but otherwise we live normal lives, says Ros.

APeople find it hard to believe we didn't bring our illnesses on, but neither of us drank much or smoked. Getting a heart virus was just bad luck.

A year after they met, Chris proposed. AI'd never had a serious boyfriend, but I knew Chris was the one for

## RELATIVE CLAUSES

MMLLDC

me, says Ros. My illness made me grow up quickly and realise what was important.

The couple were married in June this year and look forward to a long

I don't like to think of Ros risking her life to have a child, but ultimately it's her decision, says

future together.

Doctors say there's no reason we shouldn't live to a ripe old age, says Chris.

Our lives are just beginning -there's so much to do. We want Chris. I know how badly she wants kids.

I'm determined to try, says Ros. You can't

to travel and to have a family.

Doctors say there's nothing to suggest the couple will pass their illness on to their children, although pregnancy let risks rule your life. And no matter what happens, we'll always be grateful for what we have.

could be dangerous for Ros so she'd be closely monitored, and she'd have to have a Caesarian as a precaution.

Paul Lewis.

Woman's own

September 2 1996

## QUESTIONS

1. What kind of illness did Ros and Chris have?
2. Where did Ros meet Chris?
3. How old was Ros when doctors discovered her illness?
4. Why did Chris and Ros feel happy together?
5. What kind of sports do they play?
6. Did they get married? When?
7. Do they want to have children?
8. Are they on a diet? Why? What can't they eat?
9. Are they medicated? Why?
10. What do people say about them and their illness?
11. Write a composition (of about 80 words) about medicine and technological advances.

## CAUSATIVE USE OF HAVE.

**Reword the following sentences, using HAVE or GET with a past participle.**

1. Someone washed my car for me yesterday\_\_\_\_\_.
2. Someone doesn't clean them for us every day\_\_\_\_\_.
3. I asked someone to paint the gate last week\_\_\_\_\_.
4. Someone tuned her piano for her yesterday\_\_\_\_\_.
5. Somebody will have to see it for you\_\_\_\_\_.
6. I asked a man to mend my shoes\_\_\_\_\_.
7. Somebody sends Maisie her dresses from Paris\_\_\_\_\_.
8. Your hair wants cutting. You must\_\_\_\_\_.
9. Tell someone to translate it into English\_\_\_\_\_.
10. Our season tickets need renewing. We must\_\_\_\_\_.
11. I'll ask someone to make a new one\_\_\_\_\_.
12. We ordered somebody to whitewash the ceiling\_\_\_\_\_.
13. Order someone to send it round to the house\_\_\_\_\_.

RELATIVE CLAUSES

MMLLDC

14. The knives want sharpening. We must \_\_\_\_\_.
15. We must find somebody to chop all this wood up \_\_\_\_\_.
16. Tell him to take another photograph \_\_\_\_\_.
17. I'm going to tell someone to add an extra room \_\_\_\_\_.
18. Your car wants servicing. You must \_\_\_\_\_.
19. He asked his tailor to lengthen the trousers \_\_\_\_\_.
20. Tell someone to bring it to you on a tray \_\_\_\_\_.