

Adjective Clauses

Classification of Adjective Clauses

Based on the Function of the Relative Pronoun

Relative Pronoun = Conjunction = WH Words such as who, what, which, how, where, when and the conjunction "that"

Relative Pronoun as the Subject of the Adjective Clause:

People => He is the man **who** lives next door.
He is the man **that** lives next door.
Things => This is the photo **which** shows my house.
This is the photo **that** shows my house.
Possession => He is the man **whose** car was stolen.

Relative Pronoun as the Object of the Adjective Clause:

People => He is the man **who(m)** I met.
He is the man **that** I met.
He is the man **Ø** I met.
Things => This is the photo **which** I took.
This is the photo **that** I took.
This is the photo **Ø** I took.
Possession => It was an agreement the details **of which** could not be changed.
the details **of which** could not be changed. = **of which** the details could not be changed.

Relative Pronoun as the Adverb of the Adjective Clause:

Time => Winter is the time **when** we go skiing.
Place => This is the restaurant **where** you can eat delicious steaks.

The Omission of the Relative Pronoun in Adjective Clauses

We can omit **objective** relative pronouns "that", "which", or "who(m)".

Examples:

Robert Jackson is the man **whom/that** they killed.
Robert Jackson is the man **Ø** they killed.
This is the car **which/that** my neighbor bought last week.
This is the car **Ø** my neighbor bought last week.

Common Mistakes

Don't Say: She is the woman who she has won a gold medal in the Olympics.

Say: She is the woman who has won a gold medal in the Olympics.

“Who” is the subject of the adjective clause; therefore, we mustn't use a subject pronoun after it.

Don't Say: This is the house which it has a big swimming pool.

Say: This is the house which has a big swimming pool.

“Which” is the subject of the adjective clause; therefore, we mustn't use a subject pronoun after it.

Don't Say: The man who his car is a Porsche comes from Chicago.

Say: The man whose car is a Porsche comes from Chicago.

When our adjective clause shows possession, we have to use the relative pronoun “whose”.

Don't Say: The man whom you met him is a very famous businessman.

Say: The man whom you met is a very famous businessman.

“whom” is the object of the adjective clause; therefore, we mustn't use an object pronoun in the adjective clause.

Don't Say: The house which you bought it last year is a treasure for your future.

Say: The house which you bought last year is a treasure for your future.

“which” is the object of the adjective clause; therefore, we mustn't use an object pronoun in the adjective clause.

Preposition + Relative Pronoun

It is possible to use a preposition before "whom" and objective "which".

Examples:

The man whom you talked to has promised to donate \$1000 to the charity.

The man to whom you talked has promised to donate \$1000 to the charity.

The hotel which we are staying at was built in the 1940's.

The hotel at which we are staying was built in the 1940's.

Essential & Non-Essential Adjective Clauses

Essential adjective clauses are a necessary part of the sentence and cannot be omitted from the sentence.

Nonessential adjective clauses are an unnecessary part of the sentence and just provide additional information.

Examples:

The man **who is my neighbor** works in a factory.
who is my neighbor => Essential Adjective Clause

Mr. Jackson, **who is my neighbor**, works in a factory.
who is my neighbor => Non-Essential Adjective Clause

Point:

We must use commas to set off a non-essential adjective clause from the rest of the sentence.

Point:

We cannot use "that" in non-essential adjective clauses. We should use "which" instead.

wrong: Paris, **that** is the capital of France, attracts thousands of tourists every day.

right: Paris, **which** is the capital of France, attracts thousands of tourists every day.

Point:

Some grammarians call essential adjective clauses "defining adjective clauses" and non-essential adjective clauses "non-defining adjective clauses".

Non-Essential Adjective Clause Modifying the Whole Sentence

Sometimes instead of modifying a noun, an adjective clause modifies the whole sentence.

Point:

As this adjective clause is non-essential, it has to be set off from the rest of the sentence with commas and "that" cannot be used as its relative pronoun. We have to use "which" instead.

Examples:

The top student of the class got a low grade on the exam, **which surprised the teacher and the other students.**

Barcelona couldn't defeat the weakest team of La Liga, **which disappointed even the most optimistic fans of the team.**

Sample Question:

Mr. Thomas invested all his savings in the stock market surprised all the members of his family.

- a) that b) , that c) which d) , which

The Right Answer:

d