

Pre-Intermediate 2
Unit 5: Grammar, Part B
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Adjective Clauses

What is an adjective clause?

An adjective clause is a type of dependent clause that acts as an adjective in the sentence. It modifies a noun or a pronoun by giving more information about it. An adjective clause usually starts with a relative pronoun (such as *who*, *which*, *that*, etc.) or a relative adverb (such as *when*, *where*, *why*, etc.) and has its own subject and verb. For example:

The **book** **that I bought yesterday** is very interesting.

(The adjective clause modifies the noun *book* and starts with the relative pronoun *that*.)

The **teacher** **that inspired me the most** is retiring this year.

(The adjective clause modifies the noun *teacher* and starts with the relative pronoun *that*.)

The **house** **which he bought last year** needs a lot of repairs.

(The adjective clause modifies the noun *house* and starts with the relative pronoun *which*.)

She is the **person** **who helped me with my homework**.

(The adjective clause modifies the noun *person* and starts with the relative pronoun *who*.)

The **lawyer** **whom we hired for the case** did an excellent job.

(The adjective clause modifies the noun *lawyer* and starts with the relative pronoun *whom*.)

The **artist** **whose paintings you admire** is holding an exhibition next week.

(The adjective clause modifies the noun *artist* and starts with the relative pronoun *whose*.)

This is the **place** **where we first met**.

(The adjective clause modifies the noun *place* and starts with the relative adverb *where*.)

Winter is the **time** **when we go skiing**.

(The adjective clause modifies the noun *time* and starts with the relative adverb *when*.)

The **reason** **why she left early** was because she wasn't feeling well.

(The adjective clause modifies the noun *reason* and starts with the relative adverb *why*.)

Common Mistakes

Point:

Don't use a subject pronoun in the adjective clause when the relative pronoun (who/that/which) is the subject of the adjective clause.

relative pronoun = conjunction

Examples:

✗ The man who **he** is reading a newspaper is my uncle.

who ⇒ relative pronoun & the subject of the adjective clause

adjective clause ⇒ who is reading a newspaper

✓ The man who is reading a newspaper is my uncle.

✗ We must not cut the trees that **they** are old.

that ⇒ relative pronoun & the subject of the adjective clause

adjective clause ⇒ that are old

✓ We must not cut the trees that are old.

✗ I need a robot which **it** can cook.

which ⇒ relative pronoun & the subject of the adjective clause

adjective clause = which can cook

✓ I need a robot which can cook.

Point:

Don't use an object pronoun in the adjective clause when the relative pronoun (who(m), which, that) is the object of the adjective clause.

Examples:

✗ The man whom you met **him** is my uncle.

whom ⇒ relative pronoun and the object of the clause

"whom" is the objective form of "who"

you ⇒ the subject of the clause

adjective clause ⇒ whom you met

✓ The man whom you met is my uncle.

✗ The robot which you have designed **it** is very useful.

which ⇒ the object of the adjective clause

you ⇒ the subject of the adjective clause

adjective clause ⇒ which you have designed

✓ The robot which you have designed is very useful.

✗ The trees that the lumberjack cut **them** were very old.

that ⇒ relative pronoun & the object of the adjective clause

the lumberjack ⇒ the subject of the adjective clause

adjective clause ⇒ that the lumberjack cut

✓ The trees that the lumberjack cut were very old.

Point:

When the adjective clause shows possession, use the relative pronoun "whose".

possession = being the owner of something; having something

Example:

✗ The man **who his** car is a Porsche wants to see you.

✓ The man whose car is a Porsche wants to see you.

? How can we understand the relative pronoun in an adjective clause is functioning as the subject or the object of the adjective clause?

To understand the function of the relative pronoun in an adjective clause, we need to look at the verb in the clause and see who or what is doing the action or being in the state. The relative pronoun that does the action or is in the state is the subject of the

clause. The relative pronoun that receives the action or is affected by the state is the object of the clause. For example:

- *The book that I bought yesterday is very interesting.* (The relative pronoun that is the object of the verb bought, because I did the action of buying and the book received the action. Therefore, that is the object of the adjective clause.)
- *She is the person who helped me with my homework.* (The relative pronoun who is the subject of the verb helped, because the person did the action of helping and me received the action. Therefore, who is the subject of the adjective clause.)

Source:

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