

RELATIVE CLAUSES

S Study the following example :

(a) I know the tenant.

(b) He lives in that apartment.

In the above sentences, both “the tenant” and “He” refer to the same person. We can joint the two sentences by saying:

(c) I know the tenant who lives in that apartment.

In Sentence (c), we call “who” a Relative Pronoun.

The following words are used as Relative Pronouns:

WHO WHOM WHICH WHAT WHOSE

WHO is used for persons, when it is the Subject of the verb in the Relative Clause.

Example: Where are the students who are majoring in Accounting? (Here, WHO is the Subject of the verb “are majoring” in the Relative Clause.)

WHOM is used for persons when the word is the Object of the verb or the preposition in the Relative Clause.

Example: This is Professor X, whom you will be interested to know. (Here, WHOM is the object of the verb “will be interested to know”.)

Example: Here is your adviser, with whom you will be working. (In this sentence, WHOM is the Object of the preposition “with”.)

WHICH is used for anything except persons.

Example: The researcher has found the reference book which provides authentic data. (Here, WHICH functions as the Subject of the verb “provides”.)

Example: The researcher found the reference book which he was looking for.

N.B.: When WHICH is used as an interrogative — not a relative — pronoun, it can refer either to things or persons; e.g. Which of these undergraduate studente students are expected to graduate this year?

THAT is used for either things or persons. In conversational style, "That" is perhaps more common than "who" or "which". "That" is also preferred after any of the following words (or their compounds), as well as after superlatives:

ONLY MUCH FEW LITTLE NONE NO ALL SOME ANY

Examples: I will lend you the few riyals that I still have.

(Here, "that" is preferred to "which", as it occurs after "few".)

This is something that I cannot put up with.

This is the most intelligent person that I have ever met. (Here, "that" is preferred to "who(m)", as it occurs after a superlative.)

The researcher has found the book that provides authentic data (Here, "that" functions as Subject; therefore it is interchangeable with "which").

I know the tenant that lives in the apartment over there. (Here, "that" functions as Subject; therefore it is interchangeable with "who").

The researcher found the reference book that he was looking for (Here, "that" functions as Object of the preposition "for". It can be replaced by "which" or be just omitted.)

This is the lecturer that I told you about. (Here, "that" functions as Object again; therefore it can be replaced by "who(m)" or be just omitted)

It is important to note that when the relative pronoun "that" (or "which", "who", or "whom") is used as Object, it may be omitted, especially in spoken English; e.g.

The researcher found the reference book that / which he was looking for.

OR:

The researcher found the reference book he was looking for.

This is the lecturer that/who/whom I told you about.

OR:

This is the lecturer I told you about.

When the relative pronoun is omitted (as in the above examples), we have what is called a contact relative clause (e.g. "he was looking for"). Contact clauses are very common in English speech.

WHOSE is the Possessive relative pronoun. It is normally used for persons; e.g.

This is the orphan whose property has been entrusted to his paternal uncle.

For things, however, **OF WHICH** is usually used instead of "whose"; e.g.

This is the book the introduction of which is rather lengthy. (NOT: "This is the book whose introduction is rather lengthy.")

Exercise 39

Replace the relative pronoun "that" by either WHO or WHICH:

1. The E.N.T. specialist that is on call today is Dr. Saleh.
2. The sophisticated equipment that he uses is excellent for surgical operations.
3. The visiting professor that will be teaching Principles of Statistics is in the Dean's office now.

4. The make-up students that took the Arabic Language examination were very few in number.
5. A drug-pusher is a person that persuades young people to begin taking drugs, so that he can sell the drugs at high prices to them when they become addicts.
6. One of the chief things that a computer can do is to save time, money, and man-power.
7. There is still a great deal of work that has to be done before the building is ready for occupation.
8. This is the most interesting story that I have ever heard.
9. The plane that was carrying 27 passengers crashed into the sea yesterday.
10. The occasion that we have been looking forward to has finally come.

Exercise 40

In Exercise 39 there are a few sentences where the relative pronoun may be omitted (as it stands for the Object). Pick out these sentences, underlining the contact clauses.

Exercise 41

Study the following pairs of sentences, indicating which sentence in each pair, (a) or (b), is relatively more commonly used in spoken English (or is less formal):

1. (a) Mr. X is the typist whom the manager himself chose.
(b) Mr. X is the typist who the manager himself chose.
2. (a) The man with whom we had a talk is one of our acquaintances.
(b) The man whom we had a talk with is one of our acquaintances.

3. (a) The man whom we had a talk with is one of our acquaintances.
(b) The man who we had a talk with is one of our acquaintances.
4. (a) The man whom we had a talk with is one of our acquaintances.
(b) The man we had a talk with is one of our acquaintances.
5. (a) All the history majors that have obtained a Cumulative Average of 90% or above are to report to the Office of Examinations.
(b) All the history majors who have obtained a Cumulative Average of 90% or above are to report to the Office of Examinations.

Exercise 42

Combine each pair of sentences, using a “non-defining” relative clause (i.e. an “extra information” relative clause, set off by a comma or commas from the main clause:

EXAMPLE: Ali is an assiduous student. He has passed all his exams.

ANSWER: Ali, who is an assiduous student, has passed all his exams.

1. Mr. X is being operated on now. He was admitted two days ago.
2. Al-Sooda is an exquisite summer resort in the mountainous area of 'Asir. It has a cool, refreshing climate with fascinating landscape.
3. I talked to Mr. Y. He is in charge of the academic institution.
4. The Islamic University of Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud has several branches. It is the first university established in the Kingdom.

5. Prayer is one of the five pillars of Islam. It is ordained by Allah the Almighty.
6. The chief of police takes care of public safety. His work is very important.
7. Abu-Bakr was the first rightly-guided Caliph. He was the first man to believe in the sublime mission of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Exercise 43

Combine each pair of sentences, using the appropriate relative pronoun WHO, WHICH, WHOM, THAT, WHOSE, or OF WHICH. If the relative pronoun can be omitted, enclose it between parentheses.

EXAMPLE: Is that the man? You spoke to him yesterday.

ANSWER: Is that the man (that/who/whom) you spoke to yesterday?

1. Can you remember the person? You borrowed the ball-point pen from him.
2. This is a fourth-year student. He lives in the dormitory.
3. Is this the topic? You are interested in it.
4. This is the essay. Its title is rather irrelevant.
5. That is the building. Its plan was designed by a famous architect.
6. I read a book last week. It was on Urban Sociology.
(Begin: "The book....")
7. This is the man. His father is Mayor of the City.