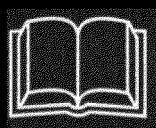


## Relative Pronouns

We have looked at Pronouns and seen how they replace Nouns: Now let us have a look at special types of Pronouns called *Relative Pronouns*.

### Sentences and Clauses

As you might guess from the name, *Relative Pronouns* are linking words, used to join groups of words together called Clauses which are parts of Sentences.



(For more information about Clause and sentences, an excellent grammar book is the following, definitely in print:

An A- Z of English Grammar and usage by  
Geoffrey Leech, Benita Cruikshank, Roz Ivanic (Longman's:  
Pearson Educational ) ISBN 0-582-405774 -2

Briefly:

- a) a Sentence is a group of words making complete sense: normally a Sentence has at least one verb which will describe the action of the Sentence or what is going on.
- b) A Clause is part of a Sentence; there are two types of Clauses. i) *Main Clauses* which have verbs and can stand by themselves to make complete sense; ii) *Subordinate Clauses* which also have verbs but depend on a Main Clause to make complete sense (See the following examples...)

n.b. If a Sentence has only one verb, then it will be a Sentence and a Main Clause at the same time. If it has more than one verb, it will be a Sentence with a Main Clause and at least one Subordinate Clause, see Examples.

### The Main Relative Pronouns

The main Relative Pronouns are: **who**, **which**, and **that**.

You will have come across these words before in all sorts of guises, for example, *who?* can be an *Interrogative Pronoun* e.g. who are you? That can be a *Demonstrative Adjective* e.g. that book.

Now we have them as *Relative Pronouns* which as just indicated are used to link together two Clauses, a Main Clause and a Subordinate Clause.

## Examples

**Who:** John is the boy who has just entered the room  
The people, who work the hardest, will do the best

**Which:** The train, which is standing at Platform Five, will leave in five minutes time  
The book (which)\* I prefer is never in the library

**That:** The building that stands in the main street is over a century old  
The tree (that\*) I can see in the distance will have to be chopped down.

\* You will notice “which” and “that” are in brackets; this is because they can both be left out of the sentence without affecting the meaning. The rule is if either *that* or *which* are the Object instead of the Subject\* of the Clause, in that case they can be left out. Quite tricky, let us have a look at some more examples:

- a) The man (whom\*) we admire is about to leave
- b) The film (that) we have just seen was excellent

\* See the next Lesson for some more information on Subjects and Objects, or consult one of the grammar books recommended...)

## Splitting the Main Clause

Finally please notice the Main Clause can be split up as you saw in the examples, with the Subordinate Clause in between two commas.

## Examples

- i) The train, which has just arrived at Platform Five, will leave in five minutes time.

The two Clauses are as follows:

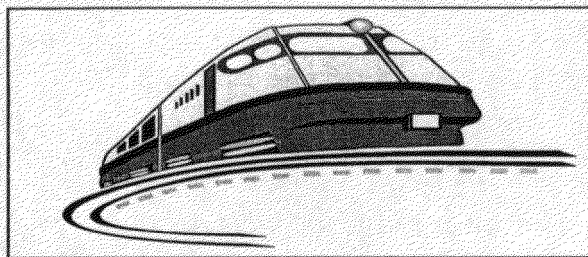
- a) Main Clause: “the train will leave in five minutes time”
- b) Subordinate Clause: “which has just arrived at Platform five.”

As you can see, the Main Clause can exist independently; the Subordinate Clause does not make complete sense on its own...

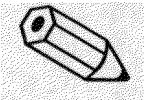
- ii) The building, that stands in the main street, is over a century old.

Main Clause: “the building is over a century old”  
Subordinate Clause: “that stands in the main street.”

Before you start on Activity Two, please note the two examples above cannot omit the *Relative Pronouns*, which and that, as both are the Subjects of their Clauses. Refer to Lesson Thirteen for more information on Subjects and Objects!



The train, that comes round the bend, is an express

<b>Activity 2</b>	<p>Join the following sentences by a Relative Pronoun to make one sentence:</p> <p>e.g. Peter is very clever. He is in my class = Peter, who is very clever, is in my class</p>
	<p>a) Peter kicks the ball. The ball breaks the window. b) That church is very old. It was built seven centuries ago. c) Those books are on the table. They are mine. d) The man was singing very loudly. He was tall and fat. e) The children are playing in the park. It is near my house.</p>

And now here is a final Activity to revise what we have been looking at in this lesson:

<b>Activity 3</b>	<p>Please complete the following sentences - there may be more than one answer:</p> <p>a) We _____ to know better! b) The swallows _____ fly away in winter. c) One _____ do what one _____ at all times! d) John _____ come if he wishes, I do not mind e) I _____ like to be in your shoes! (Negative)</p> <p>Join the following sentences with a Relative Pronoun:</p> <p>f) My hat is a bright yellow. It is hanging just outside on the peg. g) This is my boot. I bought it last week. (omit "it" in your answer)</p>
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	<p>h) Elizabeth is my best friend. She lives in the cottage across the road.</p> <p>i) I like that sports car. It has yellow wheels.</p> <p>j) Have you seen my bag. I had it ten minutes ago.</p>
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