UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA

Relative clauses

Defining and Non-defining

Llengua estrangera per a l'ensenyament: anglès

Original ppt by Neus Frigolé

Relative clauses

- Two types:
  - ***defining relative clauses:*** give essential information to understand the sentence. We need the relative to understand the sentence.
  - ***non-defining relative clauses:*** give EXTRA information. If we remove the relative clause, the sentence still makes sense.

Non-defining relative clauses

Look at this sentence:

My grandfather, who is 87, goes swimming every day.

'*who is 87*' is a **non-defining relative clause**.

It adds extra information to the sentence. If we take the clause out of the sentence, the sentence still has the same meaning.

Look at some more examples:

The film, which stars Tom Carter, is released on Friday.

My eldest son, whose work takes him all over the world, is in Hong Kong at the moment.

The car, which can reach speeds of over 300km/ph, costs over $500,000.

Non-defining relative clauses

- can use most relative pronouns: *who, which, whose, where,* etc,) but they **CAN'T** use *that* and the relative pronoun CAN NEVER be omitted.

The film, which stars Tom Carter, is released on Friday.

The film, that stars Tom Carter, is released on Friday.

- are more often used in written English than in spoken English.

- You can tell that a clause is non-defining because it is SEPARATED BY COMMAS.

Defining relative clauses

Look at this sentence:

The woman who lives next door works in a bank.

'*who lives next door*' is a **defining relative clause**.

It tells us which woman we are talking about. Without this information, we wouldn't know who the woman is.

Look at some more examples:

Look out! There's the dog that bit my brother.

The film that we saw last week was awful.

This is the skirt I bought in the sales.

Defining relative clauses

- With **defining relative clauses** we can use ***who*** or ***that*** to talk about people.

  She's the woman who cuts my hair.

  She's the woman that cuts my hair.

- And we can use ***which*** or ***that*** to talk about things.

  The dog that bit my brother.

  The dog which bit my brother.

Defining relative clauses

- It is also sometimes possible to <u>omit the relative pronoun.</u>

  *This is the skirt **that** I bought in the sales.*

  *This is the skirt **which** I bought in the sales.*

  This is the skirt I bought in the sales.

  In this sentence '*skirt*' is the **object** of the verb (buy). '*I*' is the **subject**.

When the relative pronoun is the **object**, it can be omitted.

Look at some more examples:

The film we saw last week was awful. The film THAT we saw last week was awful.

The friend I was travelling with spoke French. The friend WHO I was travelling with spoke French

Defining or non-defining?

- Remember that **defining relative clauses** are used to add important information. The sentence would have a different meaning without the **defining relative clause**.

  I'm going to wear the skirt that I bought in London.

  The defining relative clause tells us which skirt.

- *The skirt, which is a lovely dark blue colour, only cost £10.*

  The non-defining relative clause doesn't tell us which skirt – it gives us more information about the skirt.

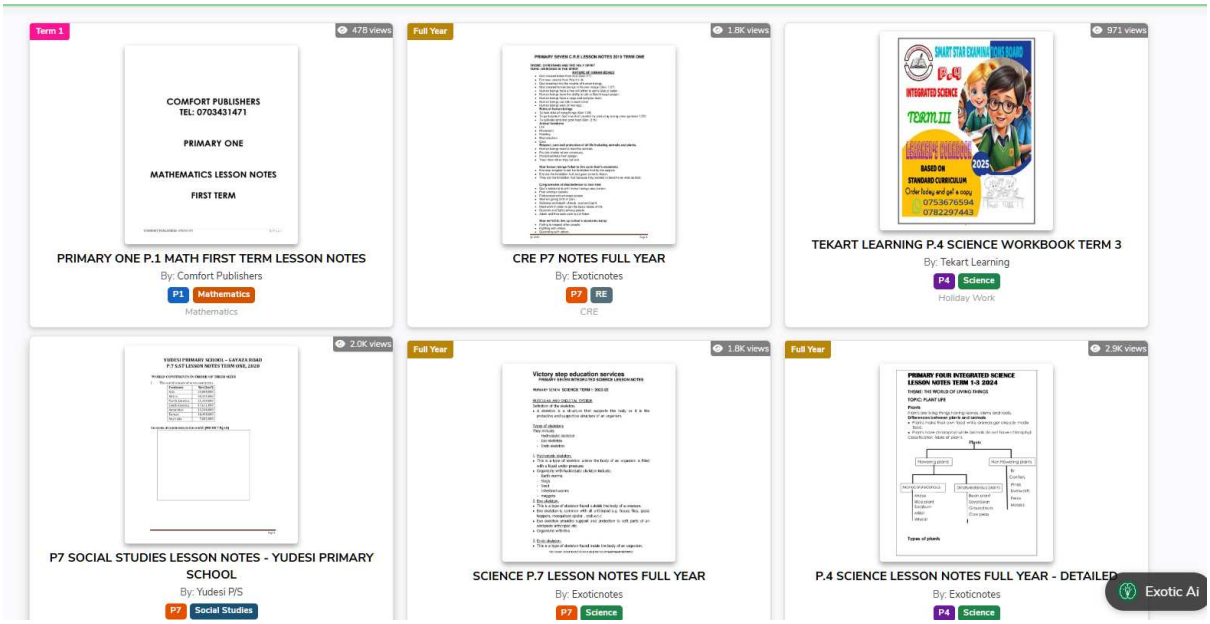
- **Join the following pair of sentences to make one single sentence.**
- **Say which sentences are defining and which non-defining.**
- **Once you have joined them, decide in which sentences you can omit the relative pronoun and in which you can't. Think about the reasons why it CAN'T be omitted.**
- **Check the answers on the following slide.**

1. She showed me a photograph of her son. Her son is a policeman.
2. The new stadium will be opened next month. The stadium holds 90,000 people.
3. John is one of my closest friends. I have known John for eight years
4. The boy is one of my closest friends. He is waiting for me.
5. Thank you for your letter. I was very happy to get your letter.
6. The letter is in the drawer. Peter has sent the letter to you.
7. Next week-end I'm going to Glasgow. My sister lives in Glasgow.
8. Next summer we are visiting the town. My father was born in this town.
9. The storm caused a lot of damage. Nobody had been expecting the storm.
10. That man over there is an artist. I don't remember his name.
11. Mr Yates is retiring next month. He has worked for the same company all his life.
12. My sister is visiting us next week. You once met her.
13. Mr Carter is very interested in our plan. I spoke to him last night.
14. I've just bought some books about astronomy. I'm very interested in astronomy.
15. The man is in prison. Janet fell in love with this man.

ANSWER KEY

1. She showed me a photograph of her son, **who** is a policeman. NON- DEFINING.
2. The new stadium, which holds 90,000 people, will be opened next month. NON- DEFINING.
3. John, who(m) I have known for eight years, is one of my closest friends. NON- DEFINING.
4. The boy who is waiting for me is one of my closest friends. DEFINING. The pronoun cannot be left out because it is the subject of the relative clause.
5. Thank you for your letter, which I was very happy to get. NON- DEFINING. THAT cannot be used and even though there is a pronoun in the relative clause WHICH cannot be left out because in non-defining relative clauses the pronoun can NEVER be left out.
6. The letter (that/which) Peter has sent to you is in the drawer. DEFINING. Both THAT and WHICH can be used in this relative clause and the pronoun can be left out because there is a subject: "Peter"
7. Next week-end I'm going to Glasgow, where my sister lives.
8. Next summer we are visiting the town where my father was born. /in which my father was born/ (which) my father was born in. DEFINING
9. Nobody had been expecting the storm, which caused a lot of damage. NON- DEFINING.
10. That man over there, whose name I don't remember, is an artist. NON- DEFINING.
11. Mr Yates, who has worked for the same company all his life, is retiring next month. NON- DEFINING.
12. My sister, who(m) you once met, is visiting us next week. NON- DEFINING. WHOM can be used because it functions as the object of the relative clause.
13. Mr Carter, who I spoke to last night/ to whom I spoke last night, is very interested in our plan. NON- DEFINING. WHOM can be used because it is preceded by a preposition.
14. I've just bought some books about astronomy, which I'm very interested in. NON-DEFINING.
15. The man who/that Janet fell in love with/ Janet fell in love with / with whom Janet fell in love is in prison. DEFINING. The relative pronouns can be left out because there is a subject in the sentence "Janet".

This document was downloaded from https://exoticnotes.com



Do you need more LESSON NOTES for Primary (All classes)?

Click
https://exoticnotes.com/notes/primary/

If you need LESSON NOTES for SCIENCE (P.1 – P.7)
Click
https://exoticnotes.com/notes/primary/science/

If you need LESSON NOTES for English (P.1 – P.7)
Click
https://exoticnotes.com/notes/primary/english/

If you need LESSON NOTES for Mathematics (P.1 – P.7)
Click
https://exoticnotes.com/notes/primary/mathematics/