

Relative Clauses and Relative Pronouns

Drop-in Relative Clauses



Aim

- to use relative clauses to add information to a noun.

Success Criteria

- I know that a complex sentence has at least two **clauses**.
- I use the relative pronouns **who**, **which**, **where**, **when** and **whose** to begin a subordinate clause.
- I know that **what** is not a relative pronoun.
- I know that the **relative pronoun** comes after the main noun.

Let's start with a simple sentence.

Matthew was playing the guitar.

Not very interesting, is it?

Why don't we add some extra information?

Matthew was playing the guitar. He was in his bedroom.

Ok, but still rather simple. How could we improve this?



Let's make it a complex sentence.

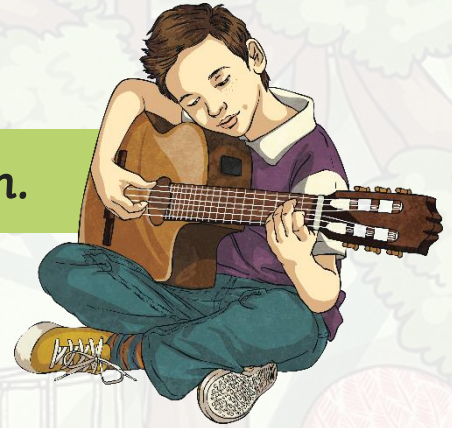
Matthew was playing the guitar. He was in his bedroom.

The second sentence adds a bit of non-vital information to the first one, so we can drop it in as a relative clause, like this...

Matthew,

who was in his bedroom,

was playing the guitar.



We've dropped in a relative clause!

Matthew, who was in his bedroom,
was playing the guitar.

main clause

subordinate clause

The **main clause** could be a sentence by itself and still make sense:

Matthew was playing the guitar.

However, the second sentence is now a **subordinate clause**, which doesn't make any sense by itself: **Who was in his bedroom.**

The **subordinate clause** has to be stapled into the sentence with **commas**.

So it's all relative, then?

We've replaced the pronoun in the second sentence with a relative pronoun. Can you spot it?

Matthew was playing the guitar. **He** was in his bedroom.

Matthew, **who** was in his bedroom, was playing the guitar.

Who is the relative pronoun we use to replace 'people' nouns/pronouns.

Other Relative Pronouns

Which is the relative pronoun we use to replace 'objects' nouns/pronouns.

Apples grow on trees. **They** are very healthy.

Apples, **which** are very healthy, grow on trees.

Other Relative Pronouns

Whose is the relative pronoun we use to replace possessive pronouns.

My dog is called Frizz. **His** fur is very curly.

My dog, **whose** fur is very curly, is called Frizz.

Other Relative Pronouns

Whose is the relative pronoun we use to replace possessive pronouns.

Victoria became Queen in 1837. Before Elizabeth II, **her** reign was the longest in British history.

Victoria, **whose** reign was the longest in British history before Elizabeth II, **became Queen in 1837**.

Other Relative Pronouns

Where is the relative pronoun we use to replace 'place' nouns/pronouns.

Mallorca is a Spanish island. We go there on holiday.

Mallorca, where we go on holiday, is a Spanish island.

The relative pronoun always goes straight after the main noun, so sometimes we have to re-order the clause slightly.

Other Relative Pronouns

When is the relative pronoun we use to replace 'time' noun phrases/pronouns.

In 2008, I was two years old. My brother was born in 2008.

In 2008, **when** my brother was born, I was two years old.

The relative pronoun '**that**' is used for relative clauses where the added information is vital to the meaning of a sentence. When using 'that', we tend not to use commas around the relative clause. For example:
The old house that is next to our school is up for sale.

Instead of, not as well as...

Relative pronouns are used in relative clauses. Can you spot what's wrong with these new sentences?

My mum is a doctor. Her name is Safira.

My mum, whose ~~her~~ name is Safira, is a doctor.

The writer has left the pronoun in the new subordinate clause, as well as adding a relative pronoun.

Punctuation

Relative clauses containing non-vital information have to be separated from the main clause. Typically, we use commas to mark the relative clauses, although dashes or brackets can also be used.

George was passed by a fire engine, which had its blue lights on.

Hospitals (where doctors and nurses work) are very busy places.

Grandma – whose eyes are sensitive – has to wear dark glasses.

Plenary

What have we learned?

We can combine two simple sentences into a complex sentence using a relative pronoun.

Relative pronouns look like question words, but they're actually **replacing** a noun.

One of the sentences becomes a subordinate clause which we place after the noun.

