Explanations

Subject or object

- Subject or object
  Relative clauses give extra information about a noun in the main clause. Relative clauses begin with a relative pronoun (who, which, that, whom, whose). The relative pronoun can be the subject of the clause:
  
  That's the woman who bought my car.
  The woman (subject) bought my car (object).
  Or the object of the clause:
  That's the car that I used to own.
  I (subject) used to own the car (object).

- Combining sentences
  Note how sentences are combined.
  Subject: This is Jean. She bought my car.
  Jean is the person who bought my car.
  She is not repeated, as the person is the subject.
  Object: That is Jean's car. I used to own it.
  That's the car that I used to own.
  It is not repeated, as the car is the object.

Defining or non-defining

- Defining
  Defining clauses give important information which tells us exactly what is being referred to.
  
  That book which you lent me is really good.
  This indicates which book we are talking about. Without the relative clause, it might be difficult to understand the meaning.

- Non-defining
  Non-defining clauses add extra information. They are separated by commas in writing, and by a pause on either side (where the commas are) in speaking.
  
  The book, which I hadn't read, was still on the shelf.
  This gives extra information about the book. We could miss out the relative clause and the meaning would still be clear.

Omitting the relative pronoun

- Defining relative clauses
  In a defining relative clause we can leave out the relative pronoun if it is the object of the clause.
  
  That's the car (that) I used to own.
  We cannot miss out the relative pronoun if it is the subject of the clause.
  
  That's the woman who bought my car.

- Non-defining relative clauses
  In a non-defining relative clause we cannot leave out the relative pronoun.
**Which, who and that**

- *That* instead of *which*
  
  When we talk about things, *that* is often used instead of *which*. This is very common in speech.
  
  *Is this the house that you bought?*

- *That* instead of *who*
  
  When we talk about people, *that* can be used instead of *who*. This is less common, but we still do it, especially in speech.
  
  *Have you met the boy that Sue is going to marry?*

- *Which* in non-defining clauses
  
  *That* cannot be used to introduce a non-defining clause.
  
  *The hotel, which was a hundred years old, was very comfortable.*

- Prepositions
  
  *That* cannot be used after a preposition.
  
  *This is the car (that/which) I paid £2000 for.* (speech)
  
  *This is the car for which I paid £2000.* (formal)

**Whom and whose**

- *Whom* is the object form of *who*. It has to be used after prepositions. Its use is formal and quite rare.
  
  *This is the person (who) I sold my car to.* (speech)
  
  *This is the person to whom I sold my car.* (formal)

- *Whose* means *of whom*, and usually refers to people.
  
  *This is Jack. His sister is staying with us.*
  
  *This is Jack, whose sister is staying with us.*
Underline any relative pronouns that can be left out in these sentences.

a) I think that my boss is the person who I admire most.
b) Harry, who was tired, went to bed very early.
c) We're taking the train that leaves at 6.00.
d) Have you seen the book that I left here on the desk?
e) The film which we liked most was the French one.
f) My radio, which isn't very old, has suddenly stopped working.
g) The clothes which you left behind are at the reception desk.
h) The couple who met me at the station took me out to dinner.
i) Last week I ran into an old friend who I hadn’t seen for ages.
j) Don't cook the meat that I put in the freezer - it's for the dog.

Replace the relative pronouns in italics with that, where possible.

a) This is the magazine which I told you about.
   \textbf{This is the magazine that I told you about.}

b) John's flat, which is in the same block as mine, is much larger.

c) The girl whose bag I offered to carry turned out to be an old friend.

d) The policeman who arrested her had recognised her car.

e) I work with someone who knows you.

f) We don’t sell goods which have been damaged.

g) Brighton, which is on the south coast, is a popular holiday resort.

h) I don’t know anyone whose clothes would fit you.

i) There's a cafe near here which serves very good meals.

j) People who park outside get given parking tickets.
3 Underline the most suitable word in each sentence.

a) My friend Jack, that/who/whose parents live in Glasgow, invited me to spend Christmas in Scotland.
b) Here's the computer program that/whom/whose I told you about.
c) I don’t believe the story that/who/whom she told us.
d) Peter comes from Witney, that/who/which is near Oxford.
e) This is the gun with that/whom/which the murder was committed.
f) Have you received the parcel whom/whose/which we sent you?
g) Is this the person who/which/whose you asked me about?
h) That's the girl that/who/whose brother sits next to me at school.
i) The meal, that/which/whose wasn’t very tasty, was quite expensive.
j) We didn’t enjoy the play that/who/whose we went to see.

4 Put a suitable relative pronoun in each space, or leave the space blank where possible.

a) My bike, which I had left at the gate, had disappeared.
b) The shoes I bought were the ones I tried on first.
c) The bag in which the robbers put the money was found later.
d) The medicine the doctor gave me had no effect at all.
e) Peter, who couldn’t see the screen, decided to change his seat.
f) I really liked that tea you made me this morning.
g) What was the name of your friend’s tent we borrowed?
h) The flight Joe was leaving on was cancelled.

5 Make one new sentence from each pair of sentences. Begin as shown, and use the word given in capitals.

a) Brenda is a friend. I went on holiday with her. WHO
Brendais the friend who I went on holiday with.
b) This is Mr Smith. His son Bill plays in our team. WHOSE
This is Mr Smith whose son Bill plays in our team.
c) Her book was published last year. It became a best seller. WHICH
Her book which was published last year became a best seller.
d) This is the bank. We borrowed the money from it. WHICH
This is the bank from which we borrowed the money.
e) I told you about a person. She is at the door. WHO
The person who I told you about is at the door.
f) Jack's car had broken down. He had to take a bus. WHOSE
Jack's car which had broken down he had to take a bus.
6 Make one sentence from each group of sentences, beginning as shown.

a) The hotel was full of guests. The hotel was miles from anywhere. The guests had gone there to admire the scenery.

   The hotel, which was miles from anywhere, was full of guests who had gone there to admire the scenery.

b) I lent you a book. It was written by a friend of mine. She lives in France.

   The book I lent you was written by a friend of mine who lives in France.

c) A woman's jewels were stolen. A police officer was staying in the same hotel. The woman was interviewed by him.

   The woman whose jewels were stolen was interviewed by a police officer who was staying in the same hotel.

d) A goal was scored by a teenager. He had come on as substitute. This goal won the match.

   The goal which was scored by a teenager who had come on as substitute won the match.

e) I was sitting next to a boy in the exam. He told me the answers.

   The boy I was sitting next to in the exam told me the answers.

f) My wallet contained over £100. It was found in the street by a schoolboy. He returned it.

   My wallet, which contained over £100, was found in the street by a schoolboy who returned it.

g) My friend Albert has decided to buy a motorbike. His car was stolen last week.

   My friend Albert, who has decided to buy a motorbike, has his car stolen last week.

h) Carol is a vegetarian. I cooked a meal for her last week. She enjoyed it.

   Carol, who is a vegetarian, enjoyed the meal I cooked for her last week.

7 Put one suitable word in each space, or leave the space blank where possible.

*Murder At The Station* by Lorraine Small. Episode 5. *Trouble on the 6.15.* The story so far: Jane Platt, (*who* is travelling to London because of a mysterious letter, is the only person (*who* witnesses a murder at Victoria Station. The detective to (*who* she gives her statement then disappears. Jane goes to an office in Soho to answer the letter (*who* she had received. There she discovers that her uncle Gordon, (*who* she...
lives in South America, has sent her a small box (6). She is only to open if in trouble. Jane, (7) parents have never mentioned an Uncle Gordon, is suspicious of the box, (8) she gives to her friend Tony. They go to Scotland Yard and see Inspector Groves, (9) has not heard of the Victoria Station murder, (10) was not reported to the police. Jane gives Inspector Groves the murdered man’s ticket (11) she found beside his body. Then Jane and Tony decide to go to Redhill, (12) was the town (13) the murdered man had come from. On the train they meet a man, (14) face is somehow familiar to Jane, (15) says he knows her Uncle Gordon...

8 These sentences are all grammatically possible, but not appropriate in speech. Rewrite each sentence so that it ends with the preposition in italics.

a) Margaret is the girl with whom I went on holiday.

b) The golf club is the only club of which I am a member.

c) That’s the girl about whom we were talking.

d) It was a wonderful present, for which I was extremely grateful.

e) This is the school to which I used to go.

f) Is this the case in which we should put the wine glasses?

g) Can you move the chair on which you are sitting?

h) That’s the shop from which I got my shoes.

i) Is that the person next to whom you usually sit?

j) This is Bill, about whom you have heard so much.
9 Make one sentence from each group of sentences, beginning as shown.

a) I got on a train. I wanted to go to a station. The train didn’t stop there.
   The train I ... at the station I wanted to go to.

b) I read a book. You recommended a book to me. This was the book.
   The book I ..............................................................

c) The ship hit an iceberg and sank. Warning messages had been sent to it. The
   ship ignored these.
   The ship ...............................................................

d) The postman realised I was on holiday. You had sent me a parcel. The
   postman left it next door.
   The postman ........................................................

e) I used to own a dog. People came to the door. The dog never barked at them.
   The dog I ............................................................

f) I bought my car from a woman. She lives in a house. You can see the house
   over there.
   The woman I ........................................................

g) We went to a beach on the first day of our holiday. It was covered in
   seaweed. This smelled a lot.
   The beach we ........................................................

h) My neighbours have three small children. The children make a lot of noise.
   My neighbours never apologise.
   My neighbours ........................................................

i) I bought a new computer. It cost me a lot of money.
   The new ..............................................................

Key points 1 Long sentences with relative clauses are more common in writing. In speech it
is more usual to join shorter clauses with conjunctions.

   The hotel, which was miles from anywhere, was full of guests. (writing)
   The hotel was miles from anywhere. It was full of guests. (speech)

   The hotel was miles from anywhere, and it was full of guests. (speech)

2 In speech, relative pronouns are usually left out when they are the object of the
clause.

   This is the hook I told you about.

3 In speech it is common to end relative clauses with a preposition.

   That’s the girl I live next door to.
Explanations

Movement
Prepositions used with verbs of motion (come, go, run, etc) show the direction of the movement.

*Jack ran out of the room. Sue moved towards the door.*

Other examples: to, into, across, around, along, up, down, past

Position and place
Prepositions can show position.

*Ted was sitting next to Janet. The bank is opposite the cinema.*

Other examples: before, below, beside, in front of, near, on top of, under

Prepositions can show place.

*I live in France. Sue lives on an island. John is at school.*

See below for problems of use.

Other uses
• Prepositions are also used in time expressions.

• Prepositions cover a wide range of other meanings.

*This book is about Napoleon.*

*I can't drink tea with/without sugar.*

Problems of use
• *To* and *at*

With verbs of motion *to* means *in the direction of*. *At* is not used with verbs of motion. It is used to say where someone or something is.

*We went to the cinema. We arrived at the cinema.*

- *Next to* and *near*

*Next to* means very close, with nothing in between. It is the same as *beside*. *Near* means *only a short distance from*, which can be a matter of opinion.

*Peter always sits next to Mary.*

*I live near the sea, it's only ten miles away.*

• *Above* and *over*

Both words mean *in a higher position than*, but *over* suggests closeness or touching.

*There was a plane high above them.*

*Put this blanket over you.*

There may be little difference in some contexts.

*There was something written above/over the door.*