

What is the Difference between Defining and Non-Defining Relative Clauses

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Annotation: Defining and non-defining relative clauses they both belong to types of relative clauses. Before clarifying the difference between defining and non-defining relative clauses, it would be useful clearly understand what a relative clause is.

So, the relative clauses are used to state extra information about noun in the sentence. It is always just a combination of words (collocations) or clause, which are included as part of the main sentence.

e.g. My brother, who graduated from the Samarkand State University last academic year, is working as a teacher at school now.

The chunk “who graduated from the Samarkand State University” adds some additional information to above mentioned sentence.

Defining relative clauses give us essential information – information that tells us who or what we are talking about.

*The woman **who lives next door** works in a bank.*

*These are the flights **that have been cancelled**.*

We usually use a relative pronoun or adverb to start a defining relative clause: *who, which, that, when, where or whose*.

Introduction:

In this article, we will discuss with you how to build more complex sentences, give more information and connect the two parts with each other by means of relative pronouns. To do this, we just need to know everything about how to use relative and interrogative pronouns in English.

Relative pronouns (as well as conjunctions) serve to connect the subordinate clause with the main one.

Followings are relative pronouns in English. These words belong to relative pronouns:

English	Russian	Uzbek
who	кто, кого	kim, kimni
whom	кого, кому	kimning, kimga
what	что, какой	nima, qanaqa
whose	чей	kimning
which	который	qaysi

In general, both types of relative clauses add additional info to the whole sentence, a defining relative clause clearly adds detail about a specific noun that is defined.

Examples: *My son who moved to Korea to continue his education this autumn is enjoying classes there.*

The electric car whose price was told too high is turned out worth for that.

The main part:

Relative clauses are used to give additional information about a noun, such as a person, place or thing. **Relative pronouns** introduce a relative clause. They include **who** for people, **that** and **which** for things, **when** for time, and **whose** to show possession.

Relative clauses belong to one of two categories: **defining** relative clauses and **non-defining** relative clauses.

1. **Defining** relative clauses add **essential** information to a sentence.

*The woman **who found my wallet** handed it in to reception.*

*The student **whose dog has run away**, has gone to look for it.*

*I remember the day **when we first met**.*

*These are the earrings **that my mother gave me**.*

These clauses give **essential** information about the subject of the sentence. They define the **person**, **time** or **thing** that we are talking about. If we remove the clause, the sentence does not make sense.

2. **Non-defining** relative clauses add **extra** information to a noun or noun phrase.

*My friend's birthday, **which was last weekend**, was great fun.*

*My current girlfriend, **who I love very much**, calls me every night.*

This extra information is **not essential**. If we remove the clause, the sentence still makes sense. This type of clause is more common in written English.

Defining relative clauses are made with **noun + relative pronoun + rest of clause**.

*A kangaroo is **an animal which lives in Australia**.*

*The man **who came for lunch** was my uncle.*

*Winter is **a time when it sometimes snows**.*

Non-defining relative clauses are made in the same way. An important difference, however, between both types of clause is the use of **punctuation**. With **non-defining** relative clauses, we separate the clause with **commas**. We cannot use **that** in this type of clause.

*My favourite food, **which used to be Italian**, is now Japanese.*

*Rachel, **who we met yesterday**, lives in this neighbourhood.*

*My car, **which I bought seven years ago**, needs replacing.*

*This shirt, **which I bought last weekend**, cost £50.*

*My best friend, **who I met at university**, is coming for dinner.*

1) Take note: replacing the relative pronoun

In **informal** communication, relative pronouns, such as **who** and **when**, are commonly replaced with **that** in defining relative clauses.

*The woman **that** called last night was very polite.*

*Do you remember the time **that** you first met?*

2) Take note: leaving out the relative pronoun

When using defining relative clauses in **informal** speech and writing, the relative pronoun can be **left out completely** if it refers to the **object** of the relative clause.

*This is the shirt **that** I bought.*

This is the shirt I bought.

*The girl **who** I like isn't here yet.*

The girl I like isn't here yet.

In **non-defining** relative clauses, the relative pronoun **cannot be left out**.

3) Take note: spoken English

The relative pronoun **who** is used when referring to people. However, in **formal** written and spoken English, if the pronoun refers to the **object** of the clause, we use **whom** instead.

My German teacher, **whom** I really admired, retired last year.

The woman **whom** I called this morning was my secretary.

Conclusion:

Non-defining clauses also use relative pronouns, just as defining clauses do. The only difference is that you cannot use “that” with a non-defining clause, unlike defining clauses.

So apart from that, what else makes them different? It's easy to spot a non-defining clause in writing, as you'll see that the clause is separated by commas at the start and end of it!

You can see an additional clause in the middle of the sentence following the words “who” or “whose” in both examples, which contain additional information. They relate to a specific noun that has been pointed out specially identified: “My son” or “The electric car”.

Used literature:

1. Azizov A. Sopostavitel'naya grammatika russkogo i uzbekskogo yazykov. Morfologiya [Comparative grammar of Russian and Uzbek languages. Morphology]. Tashkent: Uchpedgiz, 1960.
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3. Fitz, H., Chang, F., & Christiansen, M. H. (2011). A connectionist account of the acquisition and processing of relative clauses. In E. Kidd (Ed.). *The acquisition of relative clauses: Processing, typology and function* (pp. 39-60). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
4. Cowan, R. (2008). *The teacher's grammar of English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Internet resources:

<https://www.ecenglish.com/learnenglish/lessons/defining-relative-clauses>