ESOL E2 – Relative pronouns

# of 16 – Welcome

Welcome to this session on relative pronouns.

This session will cover:

* Relative clauses
* Defining and non-defining relative clauses
* Relative pronouns

# of 16 – Relative clauses

We use relative pronouns to introduce **relative clauses**. Relative clauses are sometimes called adjective clauses, but in this session, we will use the term relative clause.

Relative clauses tell us more about people and things.

For example:

* Jamie, **who is 18**, has just started his university course
* We saw the sunset, **which I always enjoy**
* Marie Curie is the woman **that discovered radium**

# of 16 – Defining relative clauses

There are two types of relative clause: defining relative clauses and non-defining relative clauses.

**Defining relative clauses** adds **essential** information to a sentence. They are used to make clear which person, thing or time we are talking about. If we remove the clause, the sentence does not make sense.

Let’s look at some examples:

1. The man **who stole my bag** was wearing a blue coat.

The defining relative clause makes it clear which person is being talked about.

1. This is the necklace **that my husband bought me.**

The defining relative clause makes it clear which thing is being talked about.

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

The defining relative clause makes it clear what time is being talked about.

# of 16 – Defining relative clauses - continued

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

Let’s look at one of our examples.

The full sentence is:

The man who stole my bag was wearing a blue coat.

The defining clause is:

who stole my bag.

The relative pronoun is:

Who.

# of 16 – Non-defining relative clauses

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

Let’s look at some examples:

1. Tomas, **who is 82**, goes for a walk every day.

The non-defining relative clause adds extra information about Tomas.

1. The cake, **which was suitable for vegans**, was enjoyed by everyone.

The non-defining relative clause adds extra information about the cake.

1. The race, **which took place the day before my birthday**, raised over £10,000 for charity.

The non-defining relative clause adds extra information about when the race occurred.

# of 16 – Non-defining relative clauses - continued

**Non-defining relative clauses** are made in the same way as defining relative clauses, with a noun + relative pronoun + rest of clause.

However, there are two important differences:

1. We separate the non-defining clause with **commas**.
2. We **cannot** use the pronoun ‘**that**’.

Let’s look at an example:

My car, which I bought 10 years ago, needs replacing.

Notice that the non-defining clause ‘which I bought 10 years ago’ is separated by commas, and the pronoun is ‘which’ (not ‘that’).

# of 16 – Relative pronouns

Let’s review the relative pronouns we use in relative clauses.

Who/whom

Subject and object pronoun for **people** only.

*Example:*

The man **who** sold me the ticket didn’t have any change.

That

Subject and object pronoun for **people** and **things**.

*Example:*

The dress **that** I bought was expensive.

Which

Subject and object pronoun for **things** only.

*Example:*

The book, **which** was old, was fascinating.

Whose

Used for **possessions**.

*Example:*

This is Sheila, **whose** sister works with me.

Where

Used for **places**.

*Example*:

The theatre **where** we first met is near here.

When

Used for **times**.

*Example:*

It was the day **when** the earthquake happened.

# of 16 – Using relative pronouns

Be careful when using relative pronouns. The relative pronoun is the subject or object of the relative clause, so we do not need to repeat the subject or object.

Let’s look at some examples:

1. Sian is the woman **who she started the business.**

(‘who’ is the subject of ‘started’, so we don’t need ‘she’)

1. This is the tie **that Robbie bought it.**

(‘that’ is the object of ‘bought’, so we don’t need ‘it’)

# of 16 – Question 1

Select the correct relative pronoun from the choices below to complete the following sentence.

“The shirt **blank** I want to buy is on sale.”

1. that
2. whom
3. where

Answer: The correct answer is **a)**. The sentence should read “The shirt **that** I want to buy is on sale.”

# of 16 – Question 2

Select the correct relative pronoun from the choices below to complete the following sentence.

“Our first holiday was a time **blank** I will always remember.”

1. which
2. where
3. whose

Answer: The correct answer is **a)**. The sentence should read “Our first holiday was a time **which** I will always remember.”

# of 16 – Question 3

Select the correct relative pronoun from the choices below to complete the following sentence.

“The boy **blank** dog was missing was crying.”

1. which
2. whose
3. when

Answer: The correct answer is **b)**. The sentence should read “The boy **whose** dog was missing was crying.”

# of 16 – Question 4

Select the correct relative pronoun from the choices below to complete the following sentence.

“The film **blank** I saw was amazing.”

1. where
2. that
3. who

Answer: The correct answer is **b)**. The sentence should read “The film **that** I saw was amazing.”

# of 16 – Question 5

Select the correct relative pronoun from the choices below to complete the following sentence.

“He called **blank** I was in a meeting.”

1. that
2. which
3. when

Answer: The correct answer is **c)**. The sentence should read “He called **when** I was in a meeting.”

# of 16 – Question 6

Complete the statements below using the defining relative clauses (labelled a, b and c):

Statements:

1. Engineering is a subject…
2. What’s the name of the man…
3. These are the slippers…

Defining relative clauses:

1. **that I don’t understand.**
2. **who is wearing the green jacket?**
3. **that my mother gave me.**

Answer: The statements should read as follows:

1. Engineering is a subject **that I don’t understand**.
2. What’s the name of the man **who is wearing the green jacket?**
3. These are the slippers **that my mother gave me.**

# of 16 – Question 7

Complete the statements below using the non-defining relative clauses (labelled a, b and c):

Statements:

1. My brother’s birthday party, **blank**, was great fun
2. Gina, **blank**, has just retired.
3. I met my old teacher at the supermarket yesterday, **blank**.

Non-defining relative clauses:

1. **who is 58**
2. **which was last weekend**
3. **which was a nice surprise**

Answer: The statements should read as follows:

1. My brother’s birthday party, **which was last weekend**, was great fun.
2. Gina, **who is 58**, has just retired.
3. I met my old teacher at the supermarket yesterday, **which was a nice surprise.**

# of 16 – End

Well done. You have completed this session on relative pronouns.

We have covered:

* Relative clauses
* Defining and non-defining relative clauses
* Relative pronouns

If you have any questions about anything covered in this session, speak to your tutor for more help.