

RELATIVE CLAUSES

Two kinds of relative clauses can be distinguished: defining relative clauses and non-defining relative clauses. The relative pronouns used are: “**who – which – whom – that – whose**”.

1. Defining relative clauses (DRC) qualify a noun and tell us exactly which person or thing is being referred to. They are more common in the spoken language. When we speak, there is no pause before or after a DRC, and no commas (,) are used when we write.

e.g. People **who are selfish** are unbearable. (“who are selfish” tells us exactly which people are unbearable).

I saw the woman **whose son had been killed in an aircraft crash**.

In DRC, the relative pronoun can be left out if it is the object of the relative clause.

e.g. Did you like the present (**which**) I sent you? (“which” can be left out here). If the relative pronoun is the subject of the clause, we cannot leave it out.

e.g. I met a woman **who** works for the UN Organization. (“who” here cannot be left out).

2. Non-defining relative clauses (NDRC) add extra information to a sentence. We use pauses before and after the relative clauses when we speak and commas when we write. NDRC are more common in writing.

e.g. My grandfather, **who is 75 years old**, still goes jogging twice a week. My car, **which is 25 years old**, often lets me down.

Paul, whose house is opposite ours, is a successful businessman.

Relative pronouns cannot be left out of NDRC.