

Defining and Non-defining Relative Clauses – Worksheet 1

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ Score: / 39



Do this worksheet
online and check your
answers instantly

Exercise 1: Complete the sentences

Complete each sentence with *who*, *which*, *whose*, *where*, *when* or *that*. Use 'that' only where it is possible.

Example: The woman ___ lives upstairs is a nurse. → *who* / *that*

1. My sister, _____ lives in Lisbon, is a doctor.
2. The laptop _____ I bought last month has already stopped working.
3. Mr Patel, _____ daughter is in my class, runs a bakery.
4. This is the café _____ we first met.
5. I'll never forget the summer _____ we drove across Canada.
6. Our new flat, _____ has a balcony, is close to the station.
7. Do you know anyone _____ can fix a bike?
8. The hotel, _____ was built in 1890, has been completely renovated.
9. Is that the student _____ essay won the prize?

Exercise 2: Choose from the box

Complete the sentences with a word from the box. Use each word once. There are two extra words.

WORD BOX

who which whose where when why whom what how

10. The reason _____ she left early is still a mystery.
11. Professor Lindqvist, _____ I met at the conference, has invited me to give a talk.
12. The village _____ my grandparents grew up has changed a lot.
13. Lucia, _____ brother is a famous chef, cooked dinner for us.
14. 2015 was the year _____ I finally finished university.
15. He failed his driving test, _____ surprised everyone.
16. The people _____ live next door are very friendly.

Exercise 3: Join the sentences

Join the two sentences using a non-defining relative clause. Turn the second sentence into the relative clause and use the word in brackets. Remember the commas.

Example: Tom is a pilot. He lives next door. (who) → Tom, who lives next door, is a pilot.

17. My grandmother is 90. She still swims every morning. (who)

18. The Amazon is the largest rainforest in the world. It covers parts of nine countries. (which)

19. Ahmed is studying medicine. His father is a surgeon. (whose)

20. We stayed in Kyoto. We visited lots of temples there. (where)

21. I spoke to Ms Okafor. I had emailed her the day before. (whom)

22. The match was cancelled. This annoyed the fans. (which)

23. My phone is only two years old. I bought it in Berlin. (which)

24. They got married in June. The weather is usually perfect then. (when)

Exercise 4: Find and correct the mistake

Each sentence has one mistake. Write the correct sentence.

Example: The boy which won the race is my cousin. → The boy who won the race is my cousin.

25. The woman which works in the library is my aunt.

26. My father, that is a teacher, loves gardening.

27. This is the house where I was born in.

28. The man who's car was stolen called the police.

29. Is this the book what you recommended?

30. The film, which we watched it last night, was brilliant.

31. Rome which I visited last year is full of history.

32. She didn't call me back, what really upset me.

Exercise 5: Put the words in order

Put the words in the correct order to make sentences and questions. Add commas where necessary.

Example: who / the girl / is / she / won / the competition → She is the girl who won the competition.

33. Is / that / the man / who / told you / about the job / ?

34. don't / I / people / like / who / are / rude

35. Can / you / recommend / a restaurant / where / we / can / eat outside / ?

36. My cousin / who / lives / in Toronto / is visiting / us / next week

37. Why / didn't / you / buy / the jacket / that / you / tried on / ?

38. The students / whose / tickets / were lost / weren't / allowed / to enter

39. Who / was / the person / you / were / talking to / ?

Answer key – Defining and Non-defining Relative Clauses – Worksheet 1

Exercise 1: Complete the sentences

1. who

This non-defining clause is about a person, so we use 'who'. 'That' is not possible here.

2. that

The reviewer's answer 'that' is already accepted, because both 'that' and 'which' are correct in a defining clause about a thing, so no change is needed.

3. whose

'Whose' shows possession (Mr Patel's daughter).

4. where

'Where' refers to a place and means 'in which'.

5. when

'When' refers to a time. In a defining clause, 'that' is also possible.

6. which

This non-defining clause is about a thing, so we use 'which', not 'that'.

7. who

The reviewer's answer 'who' is already accepted, because 'who' or 'that' is correct as the subject of a defining clause about a person, so no change is needed.

8. which

This clause adds extra information about a thing, so we use 'which'.

9. whose

'Whose' shows possession (the student's essay).

Exercise 2: Choose from the box

10. why

We use 'why' after 'the reason'.

11. whom

'Whom' is the formal object form for people. 'Who' is also possible in less formal English.

12. where

'Where' refers to a place.

13. whose

'Whose' shows possession (Lucia's brother).

14. when

'When' refers to a time.

15. which

'Which' can refer to the whole previous clause. 'What' is not possible here.

16. who

'Who' is the subject of the clause and refers to people.

Exercise 3: Join the sentences

17. My grandmother, who still swims every morning, is 90.

The extra information about a person goes between commas after 'my grandmother'.

18. The Amazon, which covers parts of nine countries, is the largest rainforest in the world.

'Which' replaces 'it' and comes straight after 'The Amazon'.

19. Ahmed, whose father is a surgeon, is studying medicine.

'Whose' replaces 'his'.

20. We stayed in Kyoto, where we visited lots of temples.

'Where' replaces 'there', so we do not repeat 'there'.

21. I spoke to Ms Okafor, whom I had emailed the day before.

'Whom' replaces the object 'her', so we do not repeat 'her'.

22. The match was cancelled, which annoyed the fans.

'Which' refers to the whole idea in the first sentence.

23. My phone, which I bought in Berlin, is only two years old.

'Which' replaces the object 'it', so we do not repeat 'it'.

24. They got married in June, when the weather is usually perfect.

'When' replaces 'then' and refers to June.

Exercise 4: Find and correct the mistake

25. **The woman who works in the library is my aunt.**
For people we use 'who' or 'that', not 'which'.
26. **My father, who is a teacher, loves gardening.**
'That' cannot be used in non-defining relative clauses.
27. **This is the house where I was born.**
'Where' already means 'in which', so we do not add 'in'.
28. **The man whose car was stolen called the police.**
The possessive form is 'whose'. 'Who's' means 'who is' or 'who has'.
29. **Is this the book that you recommended?**
The reviewer's correction with 'that' is already accepted, because 'what' cannot follow a noun as a relative pronoun and 'that', 'which' or no pronoun is correct, so no change is needed.
30. **The film, which we watched last night, was brilliant.**
'Which' is already the object, so 'it' must be removed.
31. **Rome, which I visited last year, is full of history.**
A non-defining clause about a unique place needs commas.
32. **She didn't call me back, which really upset me.**
To refer to a whole clause we use 'which', not 'what'.

Exercise 5: Put the words in order

33. **Is that the man who told you about the job?**
This is a question with a defining clause that identifies the man.
34. **I don't like people who are rude.**
The defining clause 'who are rude' tells us which people.
35. **Can you recommend a restaurant where we can eat outside?**
'Where' introduces a clause about a place.
36. **My cousin, who lives in Toronto, is visiting us next week.**
This clause is extra information, so it needs commas.
37. **Why didn't you buy the jacket that you tried on?**
'That you tried on' is a defining clause that identifies the jacket.
38. **The students whose tickets were lost weren't allowed to enter.**
'Whose tickets were lost' defines which students, so there are no commas.
39. **Who was the person you were talking to?**
The relative pronoun is omitted because it is the object of the clause.

Notes for teachers: Start by contrasting two sentences, for example 'My brother who lives in Oslo' and 'My brother, who lives in Oslo.'. Ask what each one tells us about how many brothers there are. Common mistakes include using 'that' in non-defining clauses, forgetting the commas and adding an extra pronoun ('which we watched it'). Learners also confuse 'whose' with 'who's' and use 'what' instead of 'which'. As a follow-up, ask learners to write five sentences about people and places in their town, using at least two non-defining clauses.