

# Relative Pronouns

Relative pronouns are words that connect independent clauses (main sentences) and relative clauses (subordinate sentences). They serve as adjectives, modifying the nouns or pronouns in the main sentences. These are also known as adjective clauses.

## ***Types of Relative Pronouns***

There are six common relative pronouns in English: who, whom, whose, which, that, where, and when. Each of them has a different function and usage.

### **Who.**

The pronoun "**Who**" is used to refer to the subject of a sentence, usually a person or a group of people.

For example:

- The man **who** lives next door is very friendly.
- The students **who** passed the exam were very happy.

### **Whom**

The pronoun "**Whom**" is used to refer to the object of a sentence, usually a person or a group of people. It is often preceded by a preposition.

For example:

- The woman **to whom** I gave the flowers was very surprised.
- The people **with whom** I work are very professional.

### **Whose**

The pronoun "**Whose**" is used to indicate possession, usually of a person or a group of people. It can also be used for animals or things in some cases.

For example:

- The girl **whose** bike was stolen was very sad.

- The dog **whose** owner is away is very lonely.

## **Which**

The pronoun "**Which**" is used to refer to animals and things. It can also be used for groups or categories.

For example:

- The cat **which** sleeps on the sofa is very lazy.
- The book **which** I bought yesterday is very interesting.

## **That**

The pronoun "**That**" is used in defining clauses for people, animals, or things. It can replace **who**, **whom**, or **which** in some cases.

For example:

- The teacher **that** taught me English is very nice.
- The car **that** was stolen last month was found in a river.

## **Where and When**

Where and when are used for time and place in some dialects of English?

They can replace in which or on which in some cases.

For example:

- The house **where** I grew up is very old.
- The day **when** I met you was very special.

## **Examples of Relative Pronouns**

Here are some examples of how relative pronouns are used in sentences:

- Angela, **who** is a teacher, also works as a social worker. (The pronoun "**Who**" modifies **Angela** and connects the two clauses.)
- The car **that** was stolen last month was found in a river. (The pronoun "**That**" defines the car and connects the two clauses.)

- She is the girl **whom** I was talking about. (The pronoun "**Whom**" is the object of the preposition about and connects the two clauses.)
- The boy, **whose** sister is a renowned orator, is an orator himself. (The pronoun "**Whose**" indicates the possession of the sister and connects the two clauses.)

## The purpose of relative pronouns

Relative pronouns are used to introduce a description of a noun. This description can either identify the noun or provide more information about it.

### Identifying a noun

- The man who called yesterday has already come.

Noun: the man

Relative: who

Description : called yesterday ( to identify him)

The use of "who" made it easy for us to introduce a short description into the sentence (who called yesterday) to identify and say precisely which man it was.

- The pictures that we took together are beautiful.

Noun: the pictures

Relative: that

Description: we took together (to identify which pictures we're talking about).

- The car which I was driving is my father's.

- The man whose hat is blue is my teacher.
- I have a date with the girl whom I met in the mall.

### Give information.

- The president who still looks young is making a speech.

Noun: president

Relative: who

Description: who still looks young

Here, we've used the relative "who" to introduce one more piece of information (still looks young) about the noun (president).

- A motorcycle hit my car which I have just painted.
- I was very tired and I had to attend a show that lasted 3 hours.

## Compound Relative Pronouns

There are also some compound relative pronouns in English, which are formed by adding **-ever** or **-soever** to the common relative pronouns.

These are: **whoever**, **whosoever**, **whichever**, **whatever**, and **whatsoever**.

They are used to express an indefinite or unknown antecedent.

For example:

- **Whoever** is ready can speak first. ("**Whoever**" means any person who.)
- You can take **whichever** sweet you like. ("**Whichever**" means any one of the sweets.)
- **Whatever** he takes up, he finishes it in time. ("**Whatever**" means anything that.)

## Restrictive and Nonrestrictive Relative Pronouns

Relative pronouns can also be classified into restrictive and nonrestrictive relative pronouns, depending on the type of clause they introduce.

### Restrictive Relative Pronouns

Restrictive relative pronouns introduce restrictive clauses, which are essential to identify the modified noun or pronoun. They do not have commas around them.

For example:

- The woman **who** is wearing a red dress is my sister. (The clause "**who is wearing a red dress**" is necessary to identify the woman.)
- The book **that** I bought yesterday is very interesting. (The clause "**that I bought yesterday**" is necessary to define the book.)

### Nonrestrictive Relative Pronouns

Nonrestrictive relative pronouns introduce nonrestrictive clauses, which offer additional, nonessential information about the modified noun or pronoun. They have commas around them.

For example:

- My sister, **who** is wearing a red dress, is coming to dinner. (The clause "**who is wearing a red dress**" is not necessary to identify the sister.)
- The book, **which** I bought yesterday, is very interesting. (The clause "**which I bought yesterday**" is not necessary to define the book.)

## Relative Pronoun Exercises

To reinforce your understanding of relative pronouns, you can try some interactive exercises that will test your knowledge and skills.

Here are some examples of exercises you can do:

**A- Fill in the blanks with the correct relative pronoun: who, whom, whose, which, that, where, or when.**

1. - The man \_\_\_ helped me and was very kind.
2. - The city \_\_\_ I visited last year was very beautiful.
3. - The woman to \_\_\_ I spoke was very rude.
4. - The dog \_\_\_ barks a lot and is very annoying.
5. - The movie \_\_\_ we watched yesterday was very boring.
6. - The place \_\_\_ we met was very crowded.
7. - The time \_\_\_ we spent together was very memorable.

**A - Answers:**

1. The man **who** helped me was very kind.
2. The city **that** I visited last year was very beautiful.
3. The woman **whom** I spoke to was very rude.
4. The dog **that** barks a lot is very annoying.
5. The movie **that** we watched yesterday was very boring.
6. The place **where** we met was very crowded.
7. The time **when** we spent together was very memorable.

**B - Identify whether the relative pronoun is restrictive or nonrestrictive and add commas if necessary.**

1. - The book that I bought yesterday is very interesting.
2. - The book, which I bought yesterday, is very interesting.
3. - The woman who is wearing a red dress is my sister.
4. - The woman, who is wearing a red dress, is my sister.
5. - The car that was stolen last month was found in a river.
6. - The car, which was stolen last month, was found in a river.

**B - Answers:**

1. Restrictive, no commas needed
2. Nonrestrictive, commas needed
3. Restrictive, no commas needed

4. Nonrestrictive, commas needed
5. Restrictive, no commas needed
6. Nonrestrictive, commas needed

**C - Rewrite the sentences using compound relative pronouns: whoever, whosoever, whichever, whatever, or whatsoever.**

1. - Any person who wants to join the club can apply.
2. - You can choose any one of the books.
3. - Anything that he says is true.

**C - Answers:**

1. Whoever wants to join the club can apply.
2. You can choose whichever book.
3. Whatever he says is true.

You can check your answers with the solutions provided and see how well you did.

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

Here are some common questions and answers about relative pronouns in English grammar:

**- What is a relative pronoun?**

- A relative pronoun is a word that connects independent clauses (main sentences) and relative clauses (subordinate sentences). It serves as an adjective, modifying the nouns or pronouns in the main sentences. These are also known as adjective clauses.

**- What are the types of relative pronouns?**

- There are six common relative pronouns in English: who, whom, whose, which, that, and where/when. Each of them has a different function and

usage. There are also some compound relative pronouns, such as whoever, whosoever, whichever, whatever, and whatsoever, that express an indefinite or unknown antecedent.

### **- What is the difference between restrictive and nonrestrictive relative pronouns?**

- Restrictive relative pronouns introduce restrictive clauses, which are essential to identify the modified noun or pronoun. They do not have commas around them. Nonrestrictive relative pronouns introduce nonrestrictive clauses, which offer additional, nonessential information about the modified noun or pronoun. They have commas around them.

### **Closing Thoughts**

We hope you enjoyed this article and learned something new and useful about relative pronouns in English grammar. Relative pronouns are an essential part of English grammar that can help you create complex and meaningful sentences that connect and modify different parts of speech. They can also help you avoid repetition and ambiguity in your writing and speaking.

We invite you to further explore and apply relative pronouns in your writing and speaking. You can use various resources, such as books, websites, videos, podcasts, and online courses, to enhance your learning and skills. Thank you for reading this article and happy learning!