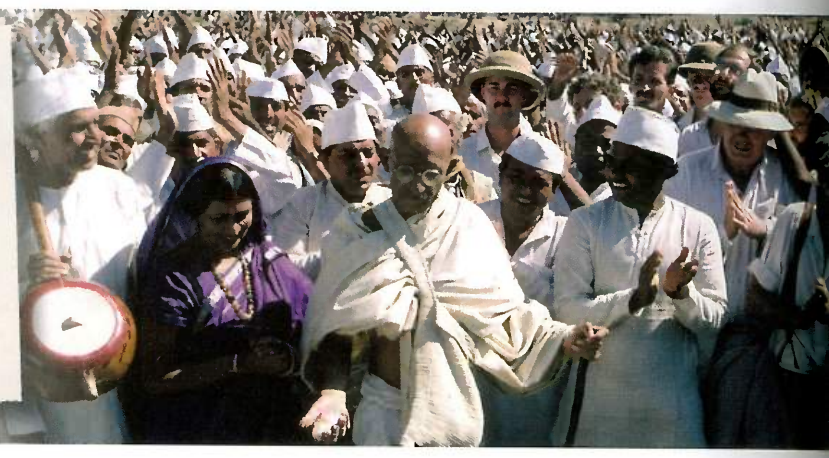
91 Relative clauses and prepositions

Gandhi is a famous film from 1982. It was filmed in the UK and India, and the actor Ben Kingsley played Mohandas Gandhi, the Indian lawyer **that** the film is **about**. It was a remarkable film with a lot of famous actors in it, and for the scene of Gandhi's funeral, there were over 300,000 people, **which** is amazing.



1 Prepositions in relative clauses

Verbs often have prepositions after them (e.g. *look* ***for***, *talk* ***about***, *go* ***to***).
In relative clauses, we usually put the preposition at the end of the clause:
I'm looking ***for*** *a book.* → *This is the book (that) I'm looking* ***for****.*
I was talking ***about*** *Maria.* → *Maria is the woman (who) I was talking* ***about****.*
We went ***to*** *that beach.* → *That is the beach (which) we went* ***to****.*

2 *when, where, why*

We can also use *when*, *where* and *why* for relative clauses

- *When* is for a relative clause about time, days, years, etc:
  We met ***on the day when*** *I passed my final exam.*
- *Where* is for a relative clause about places:
  That's ***the bank where*** *Joan works.*
- *Why* is for a relative clause about reason:
  She's working. That's ***the reason why*** *she can't come.*

There is always a subject after *when*, *where* or *why*. It is a different subject from the one in the main clause:

main clause subject | relative clause subject

That's the building where we do our exams.

⚠ When the relative clause begins with *when* or *where*, we do not include a place or time preposition:

✗ ~~*September 20th is the day when we got married on.*~~
✓ *September 20th is the day when we got married.*
✗ ~~*That's the house where we spent our childhood in.*~~
✓ *That's the house where we spent our childhood.*

3 Using *which* to make a comment

We can use *which* to make a comment on the idea in a clause:
For the scene of Gandhi's funeral, there were over 300,000 people, ***which*** *is amazing.*
(The fact that there were over 300,000 people is amazing.)
We took the children to the seaside on Sunday, ***which*** *was really relaxing.*
(Taking the children to the seaside was really relaxing.)

With these relative clauses we need a comma (,) before *which*.