

Relative clauses

Relative clauses are a common form of postmodification, and directly follow a head noun, expanding the meaning and specifying the reference of the head noun. These clauses contain the main elements of a clause (verb, subject, etc.) and are introduced by a relative pronoun or relative adverb. Relative pronouns are *which, that, who, whom, whose* and relative adverbs include *where, when* and *why*.

Defining relative clauses

These postmodify a noun phrase, giving more information about it.

We interviewed students who had scored over 70% in our test. (All the students we interviewed had scored over 70%.)

The relative pronoun can be omitted if it is the object, but not if it is the subject of the relative clause.

Did you do the homework (which) I gave you? [object]
A noun phrase is a type of phrase which has a noun as head. [subject]

Non-defining relative clauses

These add rather than restrict, giving non-essential, extra information following a noun phrase. There is a comma before them, and the whole relative clause can be missed out.

Buy it at the college shop, which has loads of stationery.

5 Tick (✓) all the possible correct endings for the noun phrases in the sentences below.

- This is definitely the strategy
 - that we should adopt.
 - which is the most viable.
 - what I feel is the right one.
 - whose purpose is to win hearts and minds.
 - I've decided on.
- Patricia Di Fabia is the person
 - which we should hire.
 - that would be best for the job.
 - I believe would be an outstanding leader.
 - whom could be the right choice.
 - who I think is the strongest candidate for the post.
- We need to construct our flagship depot in a place
 - we feel to be at the heart of the manufacturing region.
 - is situated in a central location.
 - where transport links are optimally sited.
 - that has the strongest transport links.
- Ray Lewis is an investor
 - whose vision is aligned to ours.
 - that never lets us down.
 - I have always admired.
 - which needs treating with circumspection.
 - who builds long-term relations with companies.
- That is the main reason
 - I won't be able to meet the deadline.
 - why she failed to inform you.
 - which I was given.
 - that we unfortunately can't help you.

Noun clauses

Noun clauses can be introduced by:
 the subordinator *that*: *That study independent of the teacher is necessary for success is obvious.*
 a *wh-* word: *Where you go is entirely up to you.*

Noun clauses can function as subject, object, complement or adverbial in a clause. Their structure is similar to noun phrases.

4 Fill in the spaces in the noun clauses using words from the box.

how that what where who why

- _____ is of paramount importance is not _____ you come from but _____ you want to work here.
- _____ you want to transport the goods halfway around the world when you could make them locally is impossible for me to understand.
- We need to know not just _____ you've decided but _____ you arrived at your decision.
- _____ no one realized it was the start of a long bull run explains why so little investment took place.
- _____ said what when is of no concern to me; all I need to know is precisely _____ course of action you've agreed on.

3 In each group of five, match the sentence beginnings with the appropriate endings to complete the definitions.

- An excuse is the reason
 - A logistics manager is a senior employee
 - Today's younger consumer is typically someone
 - The 'sell-by date' is the date by
 - An instruction manual is a booklet
 - A non-negotiable deadline is the day by
 - A distribution centre is a place
 - 'Keiretsu' is a Japanese term
 - Industrial effluent is a substance
 - A global citizen is a person
- who is keen to purchase the latest technology.
 - which tells you how to operate something.
 - who oversees all the transportation and delivery systems.
 - why people fail to do something.
 - which a product must be consumed.
 - where goods are sorted and redirected before being transported on.
 - which you have to get something done, come what may.
 - that comprises potentially hazardous liquid waste from a factory.
 - which refers to the system of companies with closely connected shareholdings and business relationships.
 - who has a positive outlook on the world and strives to tackle issues such as inequality.