

Explanations

Defining and non-defining

- **Defining**
A defining clause specifies which person or thing we mean. It cannot be separated from the person or thing it describes.
*By 4.30, there was only one painting **which hadn't been sold**.*
- **Non-defining**
A non-defining clause contains extra information. In writing it is separated by commas, and in speech, if used at all, is usually indicated by intonation.
*By 4.30, **which was almost closing time**, nearly all the paintings had been sold.*

Which and that

- Some of the points given below depend on the type of clause.
- These are alternatives in a defining clause, although *which* is felt to be more formal.
*By 4.30, there was only one painting **that** hadn't been sold.*
- *That* is not normally used to introduce a non-defining clause.
*The train, **which** was already an hour late, broke down again.*
- *That* cannot follow a preposition.
*It was a service **for which** I will be eternally grateful.*
- *That* is often used instead of *who* in everyday speech in defining clauses.
*Do you know the girl **that** lives next door?*

Who and whom

- *Whom* is the object form of *who* and is used formally in object clauses.
*He was a person **whom** everyone regarded as trustworthy.*
- However, this is now felt to be excessively formal by most speakers and *who* is commonly used instead.
- *Whom* has to be used if it follows a preposition.
***To whom** it may concern.*
***To whom** am I speaking?*
However, in everyday use, it is usual to avoid this kind of construction.
Who am I speaking to?
See *when* and *where* on the next page.

Whose

This means *of whom*. It is used in both defining and non-defining clauses.
*Several guests, **whose** cars were parked outside, were waiting at the door.*
*Several guests **whose** rooms had been broken into complained to the manager.*

When and where

- Non-defining
Here they follow a named time or place.
*Come back at 3.30, **when** I won't be so busy.*
*I stopped in Maidstone, **where** my sister owns a shop.*
- Defining
When follows words such as *time, day, moment*.
*There is hardly a moment **when** I don't think of you, Sophia.*
Where follows words such as *place, house, street*.
*This is the street **where** I live.*

Omitting the relative pronoun

This is common in defining object clauses especially in everyday conversation.
I've found the keys (which/that) I've been looking for.
That's the man (who/that) I was telling you about.
He was a person (who/that) everyone regarded as trustworthy.

Sentences ending in a preposition or phrasal verb

Another common feature of conversational English, as outlined in *who* and *whom* above, is to end a defining clause with a preposition.
*That's the house I used to live **in**.*
*I couldn't remember which station to get off **at**.*
*He's not someone who I really get on **with**.*

Omitting which/who + be

It may be possible to reduce a verb phrase after *who/which* to an adjectival phrase in a defining clause, especially to define phrases such as *the only one, the last/first one*.
Jim was the only one of his platoon who had not been taken prisoner.
*Jim was the only one of his platoon **not taken prisoner**.*
By 4.30, there was only one painting which had not been sold.
*By 4.30, there was only one painting **not sold**.*

Which

A non-defining clause can comment on the whole situation described in the main clause.
*There was nobody left on the train, **which made me suspicious**.*
Phrases with *which*, such as *at which time/point, in which case, by which time, in which event* can be used in the same way.
*I watched the play until the end of the first act, **at which point** I felt I had seen enough.*
*A warning sign 'Overheat' may come on, **in which case** turn off the appliance at once.*

Clauses beginning with what and whatever

- *What* meaning *the thing or things which* can be used to start clauses.
*I can't believe **what you told me** yesterday.*
***What you should do** is write a letter to the manager.*
See Grammar 14 Emphasis.
- *Whatever, whoever, whichever* can be used in a similar way.
*You can rely on Helen to do **whatever she can**.*
***Whoever arrives first** can turn on the heating.*

Non-finite clauses
containing an
-ing form

These are clauses without a main verb. The examples given here are non-defining. Note that the two clauses have the same subject.

- Actions happening at the same time.
Waving their scarves and shouting, the fans ran onto the pitch.
- One action happening before another
Opening the letter, she found that it contained a cheque for £1,000.
This type of clause often explains the reason for something happening.
Realising there was no one at home, I left the parcel in the shed.
Both these types of sentence might begin with *on* or *upon*:
On opening the letter ... Upon realising ...
- An event which is the result of another event
I didn't get wet, having remembered to take my umbrella.
- Where a passive construction might be expected, this is often shortened to a past participle.
Having been abandoned by his colleagues, the Minister was forced to resign.
Abandoned by his colleagues, the Minister was forced to resign.

Practice

The following text contains many 'which's and 'that's. Underline the ten extra ones, which are grammatically wrong.

Having just spent three weeks of my life sitting on an uncomfortable saddle, pounding the roads of France, I am in no fit state that to do anything except sit and write, which suits me fine. For I have cycled some 1,500 kilometres, a figure which includes some extremely hilly routes, and frankly the thought of mounting a bicycle again which is not one that I can face for a good few days yet. The journey, which I undertook alone for most of the way, was all in the name of charity - Help the Aged, a cause which I support whenever that I can. Having organised my sponsorship, which I arrived in France armed only with a tiny map of the Tour de France route, which hastily removed from last month's 'Cycling World' magazine. My intention which was to try and follow the route that the professionals take, but after three days in which I pushed my body to extremes that it had never experienced before, that I rapidly abandoned this plan and returned to flatter ground. On the flat which I was able to keep to about 120 kilometres a day, which is respectable. I did have to rest my weary limbs at the weekends, though, which enabled me to recharge my batteries, by which I mean my bodily ones, not the ones that inside my bike lights. I am pleased to say, that after three tortuous weeks, which I ended up in Marseilles, but what pleased me all the more is that I managed to raise over £2,000 for Help the Aged.

Complete each sentence with one suitable word.

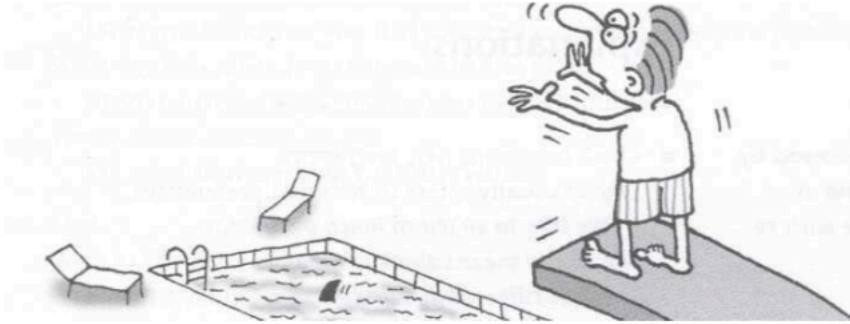
- a) Midway through the second half City scored their fourth goal, at which point United gave up completely.
- b) There is one person to.....I owe more than I can say.
- c) It was the kind of accident for.....nobody was really to blame.
- d).....leaves last should turn off the lights.
- e) Mary was late yesterday,.....was unusual for her.
- f) At 6.00,.....was an hour before the plane was due, thick fog descended.
- g) I don't know.....told you that, but they were wrong.
- h) The first time I saw you was.....you answered the door.
- i) Mrs Brown was the first owner.....dog won three prizes in the same show,
- j) I've just spoken to Sally,.....sends you her love.

- 3 Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given.
- a) I waited for him until 6.30 and then gave up.
which
 I waited for him until 6.30, *at which point I* gave up.
- b) We suggested a lot of things, which were all rejected.
was
 Everything rejected.
- c) If someone understands this book, they are cleverer than I am.
is
 Anyone cleverer than I am.
- d) I won't tell you this again, you naughty boy.
time
 This tell you, you naughty boy.
- e) The whole summer was sunny and warm, for a change.
made
 The whole summer was sunny and warm,
 nice change.
- f) I don't really approve of his proposal.
what
 I don't really approve of proposing.
- g) The police never caught the culprit.
committed
 The police never caught the crime.
- h) I have read all of her books but one.
that
 There is only I have not read.
- i) I can't remember the last heavy rain.
when
 I can't remember heavily.
- j) Do you get on with your next-door neighbour?
who
 Do you get on with lives next door?

4 Make one sentence from the sentences given, beginning as shown. Make any other necessary changes. Omit any unnecessary relative pronouns.

- a) We eventually caught a train. It was one that stops at every station.
 The train we eventually caught was one that stops
at every station.
- b) Carol slammed the door behind her. Her father had given her a car as a present. She drove off in it.
 Slamming
- c) At the end of the street was a building. The street was crowded with shoppers. Tom had not noticed the building before.
 At the end of the street ..
- d) Some people have just moved in next door. They have the same surname as some other people. Those other people have just moved out.
 The people who have just moved in next door
- e) I noticed that the door was open. I decided to go in. This turned out to be a mistake.
 Noticing
- f) Everyone expects the Popular Party candidate, Flora Benstead, to win the election. She has announced that she will cut income tax by 10% if elected.
 Flora Benstead,
- g) I listened to George patiently until he started insulting me. At that point, I told him a few home truths. He didn't like it.
 I listened to George patiently until he started insulting me,
- h) Pauline asked me a question. I had no reply to it.
 Pauline asked me ..
- i) He rushed out of the room. He was shouting at the top of his voice. This was typical.
 Shouting

- 5 Correct the mistake in each sentence. Omit any unnecessary relative pronouns in your corrections.



- a) To take my life in my hands, I walked to the very end of the high diving board. ...Taking my life in....
- b) I wasn't sure what to address the letter to, so I put 'The Manager'.
- c) Most of the guests turned up two hours early, that took us by surprise.
- d) Whoever that he spoke to last was probably the person who murdered him.
- e) The book I bought for his birthday is one where I enjoyed very much myself.
- f) There's a chance that I may be late, in that case I'll phone you.
- g) Everyone admires her. She's the kind of person whose everyone looks up to.
- h) No one knows who she is. She is the only member of the gang who the identity remained a secret.....

- 6 Most of the following sentences are punctuated incorrectly. Correct any that are wrong.

- a) Many people think that Saturn is the biggest planet which is wrong. is the biggest planet, which
- b) That's the man, I used to live next door to.
- c) I couldn't remember, which house I had to deliver the card to.
- d) The coat she wore to the party, was similar to one I have at home.
- e) Lynn is the only person in my circle of friends, who is married.
- f) Whoever catches the ball, must come into the middle of the circle.