

Relative clauses (2) (Tom, who is only six, can speak three languages.)

A Some relative clauses are used to add extra information about a noun, but this information is not necessary to explain which person or thing we mean:

- *Valerie Polkoff, who has died aged 90*, escaped from Russia with her family in 1917.
- We received *an offer of £80,000 for the house, which we accepted*.

These are sometimes called **non-defining relative clauses**. We don't use them often in everyday speech, but they occur frequently in written English. Notice that we put a comma between the noun and a non-defining relative clause, and another comma at the end of this clause if it is not also the end of a sentence.

When we use a non-defining relative clause to add information about a **person or people**:

- we use **who** as the *subject* of the clause
 - One of the people arrested was Mary Arundel, **who** is a member of the local council.
- we use **who** or **whom** as the *object* of the clause, although **whom** is more formal and rarely used in spoken English:
 - Professor Johnson, **who(m)** I have long admired, is to visit the university next week.



When we use a non-defining relative clause to add information about a **thing or group of things**, we use **which** as the *subject* or *object* of the clause:

- These drugs, **which** are used to treat stomach ulcers, have been withdrawn from sale.
- That Masters course, **which** I took in 1990, is no longer taught at the college.

That is sometimes used instead of **which**, but some people think this is incorrect, so it is probably safer not to use it. We also use **which** to refer to the whole situation talked about in the sentence outside the relative clause:

- The book won't be published until next year, **which** is disappointing.
- I have to go to hospital on Monday, **which** means I won't be able to see you.

We can also use **whose** in a non-defining relative clause (see also Unit 72):

- Neil Adams, **whose** parents are both teachers, won first prize in the competition.

Notice that we don't use **zero relative pronoun** in a non-defining relative clause.

B When we want to add information about the whole or a part of a particular number of things or people we can use a non-defining relative clause with **of which** or **of whom** after words such as **all**, **both**, **each**, **many**, **most**, **neither**, **none**, **part**, **some**, **a number** (one, two, etc.; the first, the second, etc.; half, a third, etc.) and **superlatives** (the best, the biggest, etc.):

- The speed of growth of a plant is influenced by a number of factors, **most of which** we have no control over.
- The bank was held up by a group of men, **three of whom** were said to be armed.
- The President has made many visits to Japan, **the most recent of which** began today.

C We can use the following phrases at the beginning of a non-defining relative clause: **at which point/time**, **by which point/time**, **during which time**, and **in which case**:

- It might snow this weekend, **in which case** we won't go to Wales.
- The bandages will be taken off a few days after the operation, **at which point** we will be able to judge how effective the treatment has been.
- The next Olympics are in three years, **by which time** Stevens will be 34.

EXERCISES

71.1 Add one of the pieces of information below to each sentence. Add **who** or **which**, and put the **non-defining relative clause** in an appropriate place in the sentence. (A)

~~has more than 50 members~~ caused such damage in the islands is an aviation expert
 stole a computer from the office is set in the north of Australia ended yesterday

, which has more than 50 members,

- 1 The Southam Chess Club l meets weekly on Friday evenings.
- 2 Dr Richard Newman was asked to comment on the latest helicopter crash.
- 3 The strike by train drivers is estimated to have cost over £3 million.
- 4 John Graham's latest film is his first for more than five years.
- 5 The police are looking for two boys aged about 14.
- 6 The hurricane has now headed out to sea.

71.2 Write two sentences as one, using a **non-defining relative clause** beginning with **all**, **both**, **each**, **etc.**, + of **which** or of **whom**. (B)

- 1 The film is about the lives of three women. Kate Dillon plays all the women.
 The film is about the lives of three women, all of whom are played by Kate Dillon.



- 2 The island's two million inhabitants have been badly affected by the drought. Most of the island's inhabitants are peasant farmers.
- 3 She has two older brothers. Neither of her brothers went to university.
- 4 About 30 of her friends and relations came to the airport to welcome her back. Many of her friends and relations had travelled long distances.
- 5 The minister has recently visited Estonia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan. They all have large Russian minorities.
- 6 The fish are multi-coloured. The biggest of the fish is only 2 cm long.
- 7 Scotland have won their last five international matches. One of these matches was against England.

71.3 Decide which of the underlined phrases is correct in these sentences and add an appropriate preposition in the space. (C)

- 1 I might fail the test, in which case / which point I'd probably re-sit it next year.
- 2 A bull charged towards the car, when which time / which point I drove away quickly.
- 3 I didn't finish work until 10 o'clock, when which time / which case everyone had already gone home.
- 4 The meeting might go on for three or four hours, when which time / which case I'll be late home from work.
- 5 Sam started to tell one of his terrible old jokes, when which point / which case I decided that I should go home.
- 6 I hadn't seen Jane for nearly ten years, when which point / which time I had got married and had two children.