

Book: Passages 1

Level: 10th

Unit: 3

Objective: Using defining and non-defining relative clauses and relative pronouns.

Defining and Non-Defining Relative Clauses

Defining Relative Clauses

The information provided in a defining relative clause is crucial in understanding the meaning of the sentence.

Example:

The woman *who* lives in apartment No. 34 has been arrested.

The house *where* I live is being renovated.

The purpose of a defining relative clause is to clearly define **who** or **what** we are talking about. Without this information, it would be difficult to know who or what is meant.

Example:

The house is being renovated.

In this case it is not necessarily clear *which* house is being renovated.

Non-defining Relative Clauses

Non-defining relative clauses provide interesting additional information which is not essential to understanding the meaning of the sentence.

Example:

Mrs. Jackson, *who* is very intelligent, lives on the corner.

Correct punctuation is essential in non-defining relative clauses. If the non-defining relative clause occurs in the middle of a sentence, a comma is put before the relative pronoun and at the end of the clause. If the non-defining relative clause occurs at the end of a sentence, a comma is put before the relative pronoun.

NOTE: In defining relative clauses there are no commas.

NOTE: If the sentence doesn't need the clause that the word in question is connecting, use *which*. If it does, use *that*. In other words, *that* introduces defining clauses while *which* introduces non-defining clauses.

Practice

A- Combine the sentences using relative clauses. Note that all relative clauses are non-defining.

- 1- Samuel Johnson was the son of a bookseller. Samuel Johnson was born in 1709.
- 2- In 1728, he went to Oxford. He studied at Pembroke College in Oxford.
- 3- Johnson had to leave Oxford without a degree. He was too poor to pay the fees.
- 4- In 1737, Johnson moved to London. There he wrote poetry, essays and biographies.
- 5- In 1746, Johnson started to write his dictionary. It took him nine years to complete.
- 6- In 1755, the work was published. It was called A Dictionary of the English Language.
- 7- Samuel Johnson is buried in Westminster Abbey. He died in 1784.

B- Combine the sentences using a relative clause. Note that you have to use commas in some of the sentences.

- 1- We spent our holiday in Scotland last year. Scotland is in the north of Great Britain.
- 2- People live in Scotland. They are called Scots.
- 3- We first went to Edinburgh. Edinburgh is the capital of Scotland.
- 4- Arthur Conan Doyle was born in Edinburgh. He wrote the Sherlock Holmes stories.
- 5- Loch Ness is 37 km long. People know it for its friendly monster.
- 6- There we met an old man. He told us that he had seen Nessie.
- 7- We then travelled to a mountain. The mountain is near the town of Fort William.
- 8- The mountain is the highest mountain in Great Britain. It is called Ben Nevis.

