

Book: Passages 2

Level: 11th

Unit: 7

Objective: Using optional and required relative pronouns: *who*, *which*, *that*, *whose*, *whom*.


Relative Pronouns


WHO

* refers to people

Those people live next door. They have 16 children.The people who / that live next door have 16 children.

* as subject of the relative clause: can never be omitted

I know a man. He is a lawyer.I know a man who / that is a lawyer.

* as object of the relative clause: can be omitted

I spoke to a man. I had met him before.I spoke to a man (whom / who / that) I had met before.**THAT**

* refers to people

Those people live next door. They have 16 children.The people who / that live next door have 16 children.

* refers to things or animals

A turtle is an animal. It lives in the sea.A turtle is an animal which / that lives in the sea.

* as subject of the relative clause: can never be omitted

I know a man. He is a lawyer.I know a man who / that is a lawyer.The dog ran away. The dog is mine.The dog which / that ran away is mine.

* as object of the relative clause: can be omitted

I spoke to a man. I had met him before.I spoke to a man (whom / who / that) I had met before.That's the book. I read it last summer.That's the book (which / that) I read last summer.

* it can never be used after a comma or a preposition
 The painting **that** was hanging in the foyer was stolen.
 The painting, **which** I had hung in the foyer, was stolen.

(While this nonrestrictive use tells us that the painting was hanging in the foyer, it does not tell us which of the several paintings in the foyer was the stolen painting. It would be incorrect to use this nonrestrictive clause if there had been only one painting in the foyer, as the sentence leaves open the possibility that there were others.)

The Van Gogh **that** was hanging in the foyer, **which** we purchased in 1929 for \$10,000, was stolen.

(Explanation: The restrictive clause beginning with "that" tells us that there was only one Van Gogh hanging in the foyer and that it was stolen. The nonrestrictive clause beginning with "which" tells us what the owner had paid for the painting, but it does not tell us that the owner did not pay another \$10,000 for another painting in the same year. It does not limit the possibilities to the Van Gogh that was in the foyer.)

WHICH

* refers to things
 A turtle is an animal. It lives in the sea.
 A turtle is an animal **which / that** lives in the sea.

* as subject of the relative clause: can never be omitted
 The dog ran away. The dog is mine.
 The dog **which / that** ran away is mine.

* as object of the relative clause: can be omitted
 That's the book. I read it last summer.
 That's the book **(which / that)** I read last summer.

WHOSE

* possessive adjectives with people, objects and animals
 That's the woman- her house caught fire yesterday.
 That's the woman **whose** house caught fire yesterday.

That's the house- its entrance is guarded.
 That's the house **whose** entrance is guarded.

* it can never be omitted
 * is always followed by a noun without article

WHOM

* as object of the relative clause: can be omitted

I spoke to a man. I had met him before.

I spoke to a man (whom / who / that) I had met before.

* there is a general rule:

Who should be used to refer to the subject of a sentence.

Whom should be used to refer to the object of a sentence.

When in doubt, try this simple trick: If you can replace the word with 'he' or 'she,' use **who**. If you can replace it with 'him' or 'her,' use **whom**.

Who ate my sandwich? (Did he eat my sandwich? Did she eat my sandwich?)

Whom should I talk to about labeling food in the refrigerator? (Should I talk to him? Should I talk to her?)

* after a preposition, use **WHOM**, not **WHO**

**PRACTICE**

Complete these sentences with the correct Relative Pronoun: who, that, which, whose, whom.

- 1- It is the only speech _____ I enjoyed.
- 2- She is very gifted, _____ is promising.
- 3- The children, _____ were tired, went to bed.
- 4- The man with _____ you were talking is my boss.
- 5- It is the best experiment _____ proves this property.
- 6- What the teacher wants us to learn is very long, _____ is a bore!
- 7- The very film _____ she wanted to see was the last one _____ I had seen.
- 8- Einstein, _____ theory of relativity revolutionized Physics, was short-sighted.
- 9- It is the headmistress _____ said we had to come to school on Saturday afternoon.