

What are Defining Relative Clauses?

Worksheet

A defining relative clause identifies or restricts the noun and is essential to the sentence's meaning. It uses relative pronouns (who, which, that, whose) with no commas, and the clause cannot be removed without changing the core meaning.

Questions

1. Which sentence has a defining relative clause?

- A) My sister, who lives in Paris, is a doctor.
- B) The teacher who gave us homework is strict.
- C) My father, whom you met yesterday, is here.
- D) All students, who studied hard, passed.

2. Fill: 'The book ___ you lent me is interesting.'

- A) that
- B) who
- C) whose
- D) where

3. Combine: 'A chef prepares food. The chef trained in France.' (Defining)

- A) A chef who trained in France prepares food.
- B) A chef, who trained in France, prepares food.
- C) A chef whose training is in France prepares food.
- D) A chef that prepares food trained in France.

4. True or False: Defining clauses must always include the relative pronoun.

- A) True
- B) False (it can be omitted when it's the object)
- C) False (defining clauses always have commas)
- D) True (non-defining clauses do, but defining never)

5. Write a defining relative clause: 'The woman works here. She has red hair.'

6. Combine using 'which': 'The car is fast. It has a new engine.'

7. Use 'whose': 'The student passed the exam. Her determination was strong.'

8. Define: What is a defining relative clause?

9. Define: When do you use 'who' vs 'which'?

10. Define: Why no commas in defining clauses?

Answer Key

1. B) The teacher who gave us homework is strict. — Option 2 has no commas and identifies which teacher (essential meaning). Options 1, 3, 4 have commas = non-defining.
2. A) that — 'book' is a thing, and 'that' can be omitted here (it's the object). 'that you lent' = defining clause identifying the book.
3. A) A chef who trained in France prepares food. — No commas, 'who' for people = defining. It identifies which chef (the one trained in France).
4. B) False (it can be omitted when it's the object) — In defining clauses, the pronoun can be omitted when it is the object: 'The movie (that) I watched' but NOT when it is the subject: 'The movie that starts here...'
5. Identify noun: 'woman' Choose pronoun: 'who' (people) Combine: 'The woman who has red hair works here.' Test: Remove clause — 'The woman works here' is vague (which woman?). Clause is defining
6. Main noun: 'car' Relative pronoun: 'which' (things) Combine: 'The car which has a new engine is fast.' Test: Remove clause — 'The car is fast' leaves a question (which car?). Defining
7. Noun: 'student' Pronoun: 'whose' (possessive) Combine: 'The student whose determination was strong passed the exam.' Test: Without clause, 'The student passed' is incomplete. Defining
8. A clause that identifies or restricts the noun — essential to meaning, no commas, uses who/which/that/whose.
9. 'who' for people, 'which' for things. 'that' can mean either.
10. Because the information is essential — removing it changes the sentence meaning.

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