

What are Non-Defining Relative Clauses?

Worksheet

A non-defining relative clause is a subordinate clause that adds extra information about an already-identified noun and can be removed without changing the main meaning. It uses relative pronouns like who, which, or whom, and is separated by commas.

Questions

1. Which is a non-defining relative clause?

- A) The phone that broke is in the drawer.
- B) My sister, who is a lawyer, helps me.
- C) The place where he studied was great.
- D) All the students who passed got gifts.

2. Can you remove a non-defining clause?

- A) No, it changes the meaning.
- B) Yes, the sentence still makes sense.
- C) Only in formal writing.
- D) Only if it's about people.

3. Use a non-defining clause: London is the capital of the UK.

- A) London, that is old, is the capital.
- B) London, which is the capital, is old.
- C) London, which is in England, is the capital.
- D) London that is big is the capital.

4. Non-defining clauses never use...

- A) commas
- B) which
- C) where
- D) that

5. Add a non-defining clause to: My father is an engineer.

6. Identify the non-defining clause: The new movie, which was filmed in Iceland, is out next week.

7. Why are commas needed here? John, who is my best friend, got a promotion.

8. Define: What is a non-defining clause?

9. Define: Can you remove a non-defining clause?

10. Define: Do non-defining clauses use commas?

Answer Key

1. B) My sister, who is a lawyer, helps me. — Option 2: 'My sister' is already identified; the clause adds extra info with commas.
2. B) Yes, the sentence still makes sense. — Non-defining clauses are bonus information, not essential.
3. C) London, which is in England, is the capital. — Option 3 adds extra info about location with commas and 'which'.
4. D) that — 'that' only works in defining clauses. Non-defining uses who/which/where/when.
5. The noun 'father' is already identified (mine specifically). Add extra info in commas: My father, who has worked in oil & gas, is an engineer. Or: My father, who studied at MIT, is an engineer.
6. The noun is identified: 'the new movie' Non-defining clause (in commas): 'which was filmed in Iceland' Test: 'The new movie is out next week' — still clear!
7. The noun is clear: 'John' (already identified as a specific person) The clause 'who is my best friend' is extra detail, not identification. Commas signal this is bonus info, not a restrictor.
8. Extra information about an already-identified noun, in commas, removable without losing meaning.
9. Yes — the main sentence still makes sense.
10. Yes, always — on both sides of the clause.

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