



- Woman: That's him.
 Police Officer: Who?
 Woman: That's the man who I saw!
 Police Officer: Can you be more precise?
 Woman: The one that's wearing a blue T-shirt stole my handbag.
 Police Officer: Which T-shirt?
 Woman: It's the T-shirt which has a rip.

Presentation

Relative clauses

You use a relative clause to give more information about a noun in the main clause of the sentence. The relative clause always follows the noun it is referring to:

*That's the man **who** I saw!*

*The one **that's** wearing a blue T-shirt stole my handbag.*

Defining relative clauses

When the extra information in the relative clause is essential, it is called a defining relative clause. Without the defining relative clause, the meaning of the main clause can be unclear or need further explanation. In this dialogue, the police officer needs more information, so the woman uses a defining relative clause:

Woman: *That's him.*

Police officer: *Who?*

Woman: *That's the man **who** I saw!*

who, which, that

Who, which and that are relative pronouns and you use them at the beginning of the relative clause.

- Use **who** for people: *That's the woman **who** identified the thief.*
- Use **which** for objects or things: *That's the handbag **which** was stolen.*

You can replace both **who** or **which** with the relative pronoun **that** in defining relative clauses:

*That's the woman **that** identified the thief.*

*That's the handbag **that** was stolen.*

Subject or object of the relative clause

The relative pronoun (*who, which, that*) in the relative clause can be ...

- the subject of the clause:

*It's the T-shirt **which** has a rip.*

The T-shirt has a rip.

- the object of the clause (with a noun or pronoun following it):

*That's the man **who** I saw.*

*I saw **that man**.*

Do not use another object in the relative clause when the relative pronoun is the object:

*That's the man. I saw **him**.* → *That's the man **who***

I saw ~~him~~.

Verb agreement

When the relative pronoun is the subject, the verb agrees with the subject of the main clause:

*This is **the shop** that sells T-shirts.*

Omitting the relative pronoun

In defining relative clauses, you always need a relative pronoun when it is the subject of the defining relative clause (i.e. when it is immediately followed by a verb).

Say *That's the man **who** stole my handbag.* (don't say *That's the man stole my handbag.*)

However, you don't have to use a relative pronoun when it is the object of the relative clause (i.e. when it is followed by a subject + verb):

That's the man I saw. = *That's the man who/that I saw.*

Exercises

1 Join the two sentences using a relative clause and *who* or *which*.

1 My neighbour is the person. He called the police.
 My neighbour is the person who called the police.

2 These are the books. They are for my course.

3 This is the car. It's for sale.

4 Those are the same boys. They smashed our window.

5 That's the actor. I saw him in a film last week.

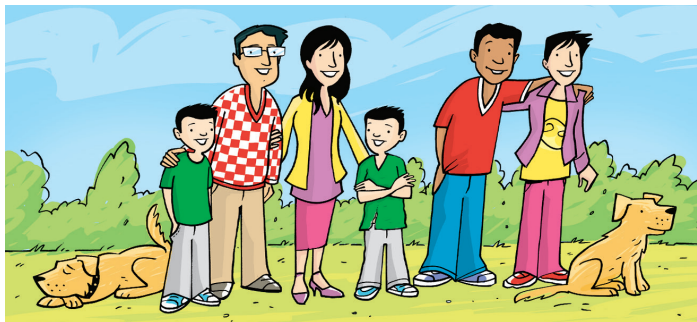
2a Look at your sentences in Exercise 1. Is the relative pronoun in each sentence the subject or the object of the relative clause? Write S or O.

1 S 2 3 4 5

2b Look at your sentences in Exercise 1 again. From which of the sentences can you omit the relative pronoun?

1 X 2 3 4 5

3 Look at the family photograph. Complete the conversations in your own words using defining relative clauses. Then listen and check.



1 A: Which man is your dad?

B: The man who 's wearing a red and white jumper.

2 A: Who are the two women?

B: Well, the woman is my mother and the other woman is my aunt.

3 B: They're my twin brothers. That's Ryan.

A: Which one?

B: Ryan is wearing the green T-shirt.

4 A: Are these your pets?

B: Max is mine and Spike is the twins'. Max is the one.

4 Find a photograph with a group of people (e.g. family, friends, your class). Write three sentences to describe and define some of them using relative clauses.