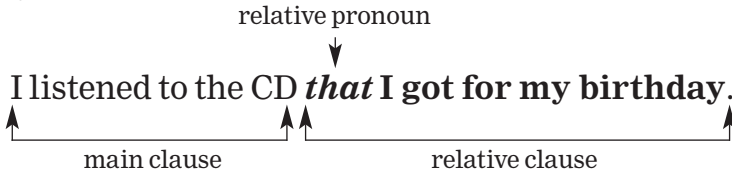


## Relative clauses

**Relative clauses** describe or tell us more about a person or thing that has just been mentioned in the sentence.

**Relative pronouns** are words that act as a subject or object in a relative clause. The following words can be relative pronouns: **that, what, where, when, which, who, whom, why**.



### Defining relative clauses

These are clauses that tell us exactly who or what is being referred to. Without the defining relative clause the sentence will not make sense. It needs to be there.

PEOPLE	THINGS
<i>I hate people <b>who</b> are insincere</i>	<i>I enjoyed the books <b>that</b> you lent me.</i>
For people you can use <b>who</b> or <b>that</b> , but <b>who</b> is more usual.	For things you can use <b>that</b> or <b>which</b> , but <b>that</b> is more usual.
In the above sentence, <b>who</b> is the subject of the relative clause.	In the above sentence, <b>that</b> is the object of the relative clause.

You **cannot** miss out the relative pronoun if it is the subject of the relative clause:

~~*I hate people are insincere*~~

The relative pronoun **can** be missed out if it is the object of the relative clause:

*I enjoyed the books you lent me.*      OR      *I enjoyed the books you lent me.*

*She's the girl that I love.*                      OR      *She's the girl I love.*

*Note:* There are no commas in defining relative clauses.

### Non-defining relative clauses

These are clauses that give us extra information about something or someone already mentioned. The sentence will still make sense without the non-defining relative clause, but the clause gives you extra information.

PEOPLE	THINGS
<i>The finance minister, <b>who</b> has been under pressure to resign, will be holding a press conference today.</i>	<i>His latest novel, <b>which</b> is set in India, has received good reviews.</i>
For people you must use <b>who</b> .	For things you must use <b>which</b> .

You cannot leave out the relative pronoun in non-defining clauses.

*Note:* **Who** and **which** are always preceded by a comma in non-defining relative clauses. In spoken English they are preceded by a pause.