

Relative clauses – restrictive and non-restrictive

A **non-restrictive clause** is a clause which is not needed to identify the word it modifies, i.e., it is just additional information. As a non-restrictive clause is not essential to the meaning of a sentence, it is offset with commas. For example:

- Peter Jones, **who plays goalkeeper for our village football team**, has worked at his father's greengrocers for twenty years.
→ *The shaded text is a non-restrictive clause. It describes Peter Jones, but it does not **identify** him. It is merely additional information about him. Deleting this clause would not affect the meaning.*

Non-restrictive clauses contrast with **restrictive clauses**. Look at this example of a restrictive clause:

- The man **who plays goalkeeper for our village football team** has worked at his father's greengrocers for twenty years.
→ *The bold text is a restrictive clause. It describes the man, and it **identifies** him. It is not just additional information. It is essential for understanding.*

<p>Task: Look at the following pairs of sentences and rewrite them as a restrictive or a non-restrictive relative clause. There is an example at the beginning.</p>
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- 00 I admired the stuntman. His part was so dangerous.
*I admired the stuntman **whose** part was so dangerous.* → restrictive
- 01 We ate the cake. It was on the cupboard.
- 02 She found the bag. It belonged to her.
- 03 We often go to visit our friends in Cambridge. It is not far from London.
- 04 Can you see the car? Its door is scratched.
- 05 Anna told me about her new job. She's enjoying it very much.
- 06 This is the guy. I got it from him.
- 07 My brother Ben lives in Hong Kong. He's an architect.
- 08 My office is on the second floor. It is very small.

Key

- 01 We ate the cake **that/which** was on the cupboard.
- 02 She found the bag **which/that** It belonged to her.
- 03 We often go to visit our friends in Cambridge, **which** is not far from London.
- 04 Can you see the car **whose** door is scratched?
- 05 Anna told me about her new job **which** she's enjoying very much.
- 06 This is the guy **that** / -- I got it from.
- 07 My brother Ben, **who lives in Hong Kong**, is an architect.
- 08 My office, **which is on the second floor**, is very small.

→**Next:** Formal Relative Clauses – of whom, of which (restrictive)