QUICK REFERENCE · WRITING · KS2

Relative clauses: sentence bank and practice

Choose a sentence. Identify the noun and explain what the relative clause tells the reader.

Identifying information: defining clauses

The dancers who wore red scarves opened the show.

The books that have blue covers belong on this shelf.

The learner whose bag was missing spoke to the teacher.

The path which crosses the field leads to the gate.

The room where we stored the paints is locked.

The morning when the power failed was unusually quiet.

The bicycle that I borrowed needs a new tyre.

The robot that lifted the box stopped beside the door.

Extra information: non-defining clauses

The dancers, who wore red scarves, opened the show.

The books, which have blue covers, belong on this shelf.

Amira, whose bag was missing, spoke to the teacher.

The path, which crosses the field, leads to the gate.

The art room, where we stored the paints, is locked.

Tuesday morning, when the power failed, was unusually quiet.

Maya's bicycle, which I borrowed, needs a new tyre.

Rolo, which lifted the box, stopped beside the door.

Relative-word reference

who: people	which: things	that: people or things in defining clauses
whose: possession	where: place	when: time

Check meaning and punctuation

Identify the noun the relative clause refers to.

Decide whether the reader needs the clause to identify that person or thing.

For extra information in the middle, put a comma at each boundary.

Use who or which, rather than that, for these extra-information examples.

Only omit object who, which or that in the defining pattern practised here.

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Grammar guidance: Department for Education (2013), Glossary and English Appendix 2; British Council (n.d.), defining and non-defining relative-clause explanations. Sentences and tasks are original teaching proposals.

Build, punctuate and explain

Use the context to choose a clause and punctuation. Write full answers in your notebook.

Worked example

The dancers who wore red scarves opened the show.

The dancers, who wore red scarves, opened the show.

The first identifies a group among several dancers. The second adds information about dancers already identified.

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1. Several learners helped backstage. Combine using who: The learner spoke to the teacher. The learner carried the torch. Identify which learner spoke.

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2. The reader already knows Amira. Add commas: Amira whose bag was missing spoke to the teacher.

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3. Can that be omitted? Explain each decision: The bicycle that I borrowed needs a new tyre. The robot that lifted the box stopped beside the door.

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4. These are observations supplied for a writing exercise: Several labelled pots stood on the tray. One pot had a cracked rim. The observer moved that pot to another tray. Write a defining relative-clause sentence. Say whether the observations explain what caused the crack.

Teacher answers, cover before independent practice.

1. The learner who carried the torch spoke to the teacher. Who refers to the learner and is the subject of carried. The clause identifies which learner spoke. Keep who and use no separating commas.

2. Amira, whose bag was missing, spoke to the teacher. The relative clause adds information about Amira. Both commas mark its boundaries.

3. The bicycle I borrowed needs a new tyre. Omission is possible because I is the subject of borrowed and that represents its object. Keep that in The robot that lifted the box stopped beside the door, because that is the subject of lifted.

4. The pot that had a cracked rim was moved to another tray. The clause identifies which pot was moved. The supplied observations do not establish what caused the crack. Which can replace that in this defining example.

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