


* **Defining or Restrictive Relative clauses**

As the name suggests, defining relative clauses give essential information to define or identify the person or thing we are talking about. Take for example the sentence: *Dogs **that like cats** are very unusual.* In this sentence we understand that there are many dogs in the world, but we are only talking about the ones that like cats. The defining relative clause gives us that information. If the defining relative clause were removed from the sentence, the sentence would still be grammatically correct, but its meaning would have changed significantly.

Defining relative clauses are composed of a relative pronoun (sometimes omitted), a verb, and optional other elements such as the subject or object of the verb. Commas are not used to separate defining relative clauses from the rest of the sentence. Commas or parentheses are used to separate non-defining relative clauses from the rest of the sentence.

* **Restrictive Clauses**

Restrictive clauses contain information essential to the meaning of a sentence. The sentence doesn't make sense without the



clause. Note in the examples below how the clause gives information to describe and define the nouns that precede it. For example, the first sentence doesn't make sense if you only say, "He's the man." You wouldn't know what man is being referred to.

He's the man that interviewed the president.

That's the place where I lost my earring.

The man who stole the necklace is now in jail.

A restrictive clause begins with a relative pronoun.

Relative Pronouns

Pronoun	The pronoun is used for a . . .
that, who, whom*	person
whose	possessive
that, which	thing
where	place
when	time
why	reason

Examples

- * Children **who hate chocolate** are uncommon.
- * They live in a house **whose roof is full of holes**.
- * An elephant is an animal **that lives in hot countries**.
- * Let's go to a country **where the sun always shines**.
- * The reason **why I came here today** is not important.