

Deconstructing Complex Sentences

Sentences with subordinate clauses are **complex** – they contain a **main clause** and a **subordinate clause**.

Can you break each of these complex sentences down into two simple sentences? You'll have to take out the relative pronoun and put back the noun/pronoun it replaced.

Look at these examples:

e.g. Winston Churchill was a politician, who was Prime Minister in World War Two.
Winston Churchill was a politician. He was Prime Minister in World War Two.

e.g. Bananas, which grow tropical countries, have to be flown to Britain.
*Bananas have to be flown to Britain. **They** come from tropical countries.*

e.g. I was at a party last night, which meant I was very late home.
*I was at a party last night. **This** meant I was very late home.*

1. The River Severn, which runs through several counties, is our longest river.
2. *Kidnapped* is an exciting novel, which was written by RL Stevenson.
3. British children usually go to secondary school in Year 7, when they're eleven.
4. Cola contains a lot of caffeine, which gives some people headaches.
5. My parents met at university, when they were both 21 years old.
6. Swallows, which like warm weather, migrate in the winter to Africa.
7. Elizabeth I, whose father was Henry VIII, never had any children.
8. Milk, which contains a lot of calcium, is good for your bones and teeth.
9. At lunchtime, when I've finished my meal, I always play on the trim-trail.
10. George Lucas, who made Star Wars, is an American film director.

Extension: (this one is slightly different; watch out!) The man I'm talking about has long brown hair.

Deconstructing Complex Sentences

Sentences with subordinate clauses are called **complex** - they contain a **main clause** and a **subordinate clause**. The subordinate clause has a relative pronoun (who/which/where) at the start. It can't be a sentence by itself.

Choose two colours; 1 for main clauses and 1 for subordinate clauses.

Highlight the clauses in each sentence.

Look at these examples:

- My dog's fur is very curly, which means it's hard to brush.
- Go and get a sticker from Mr Brown, who is standing at the finish line.
- Oranges, which contain lots of vitamins, are really good for you.

Now have a go at the sentences yourself.

1. Joseph, who has always got messy hair, never looks smart for school.
2. My cousins live in the USA, which is a long way to go for a visit!
3. These three boys, who have worked so well on their project, can share the science prize.
4. The Peak District, where many people like to go on holiday, is a national park in Derbyshire.
5. My Y5 teacher, who is called Madame Merlot, comes from France.
6. Magicians, who have to practise their tricks daily, are always fun to watch.
7. There isn't any more mashed potato, which means I'll have to have rice instead.
8. That dog wagging its tail is called Hodge, who always jumps up at people.
9. Look for the spelling in a dictionary, which you can find on the library shelf.
10. The film, which had me on the edge of my seat, was tremendously exciting!

Extension: Choose one sentence. Can you re-write it as two simple sentences which both make sense?

Relative Clauses and Relative Pronouns

Task One

Fill in the gaps in the sentences below using the correct relative pronoun.

1. The cup, _____ was my favourite, fell on the floor and smashed.
2. Dad, _____ lost his keys, was locked out of the house.
3. This morning, _____ I was running for the bus, I fell over.
4. The car, _____ was parked on the street, had been vandalised.

Task Two

Rearrange each of the sentences below to create a complex sentence with a relative clause.

Remember:

- You might have to rearrange the words in the sentence for it to make sense
- There might be more than one noun in each sentence, so you have to make sure you identify the noun which the extra information is adding to.

1. Chocolate contains 'feel-good' chemicals. It originated in South America.

2. One of the richest women in the world is The Queen. She owns several castles.

3. Australia has many unusual animals. Kangaroos come from there.

4. At 8 o'clock last night I went to bed. I had finished my homework then.

5. My favourite writer is Phillip Pullman. He wrote *Clockwork*.

6. Ostriches are the world's largest birds. They cannot fly.

7. We're having fish cakes for tea. I hate them.

8. Christopher Columbus was Italian. He is said to have discovered America.

9. Westminster Palace is in London. Parliament meets there.

10. Britain became extremely powerful during the nineteenth century.
Victoria was queen then.

Extension

Can you break each of these complex sentences down into two simple sentences?

You'll have to take out the relative pronoun and put back the noun/pronoun it replaced.

Look at these examples:

e.g. Winston Churchill was a politician, who was Prime Minister in World War Two.

Winston Churchill was a politician. **He** was Prime Minister in World War Two.

1. Swallows, which like warm weather, migrate in the winter to Africa.

2. Elizabeth I, whose father was Henry VIII, never had any children.

3. Milk, which contains a lot of calcium, is good for your bones and teeth.

4. The Peak District, where many people like to go on holiday, is a national park in Derbyshire.

Relative Clauses and Relative Pronouns

Answers

Task One

Fill in the gaps in the sentences below using the correct relative pronoun.

1. The cup, **which** was my favourite, fell on the floor and smashed.
2. Dad, **who** lost his keys, was locked out of the house.
3. This morning, **when** I was running for the bus, I fell over.
4. The car, **which** was parked on the street, had been vandalised.

Task Two

Rearrange each of the sentences below to create a complex sentence with a relative clause.

1. Chocolate contains 'feel-good' chemicals. It originated in South America.
Chocolate, which originated in South America, contains 'feel-good' chemicals.
2. One of the richest women in the world is The Queen. She owns several castles.
The Queen, who is one of the richest women in the world, owns several castles.
3. Australia has many unusual animals. Kangaroos come from there.
Australia, where kangaroos come from, has many unusual animals.
4. At 8 o'clock last night I went to bed. I had finished my homework then.
At 8 o'clock last night, when I had finished my homework, I went to bed.
5. My favourite writer is Phillip Pullman. He wrote *Clockwork*.
Phillip Pullman, who wrote *Clockwork*, is my favourite writer.
6. Ostriches are the world's largest birds. They cannot fly.
Ostriches, which are the world's largest birds, cannot fly.
7. We're having fish cakes for tea. I hate them.
We're having fishcakes, which I hate, for tea.
8. Christopher Columbus was Italian. He is said to have discovered America.
Christopher Columbus, who was Italian, is said to have discovered America.
9. Westminster Palace is in London. Parliament meets there.
Westminster Palace, where Parliament meets, is in London.
10. Britain became extremely powerful during the nineteenth century.
Victoria was queen then.
During the nineteenth century, when Victoria was queen, Britain became extremely powerful.

Extension

Can you break each of these complex sentences down into two simple sentences?

You'll have to take out the relative pronoun and put back the noun/pronoun it replaced.

Look at these examples:

e.g. Winston Churchill was a politician, who was Prime Minister in World War Two.

Winston Churchill was a politician. **He** was Prime Minister in World War Two.

1. Swallows, which like warm weather, migrate in the winter to Africa.

Swallows migrate in the winter to Africa. They like warm weather.

OR

Swallows like warm weather. They migrate in the winter to Africa.

2. Elizabeth I, whose father was Henry VIII, never had any children.

Elizabeth I never had any children. Her father was Henry VIII.

OR

Elizabeth I's father was Henry VIII. She never had any children.

3. Milk, which contains a lot of calcium, is good for your bones and teeth.

Milk contains a lot of calcium. It is good for your bones and teeth.

OR

Milk is good for your bones and teeth. It contains a lot of calcium.

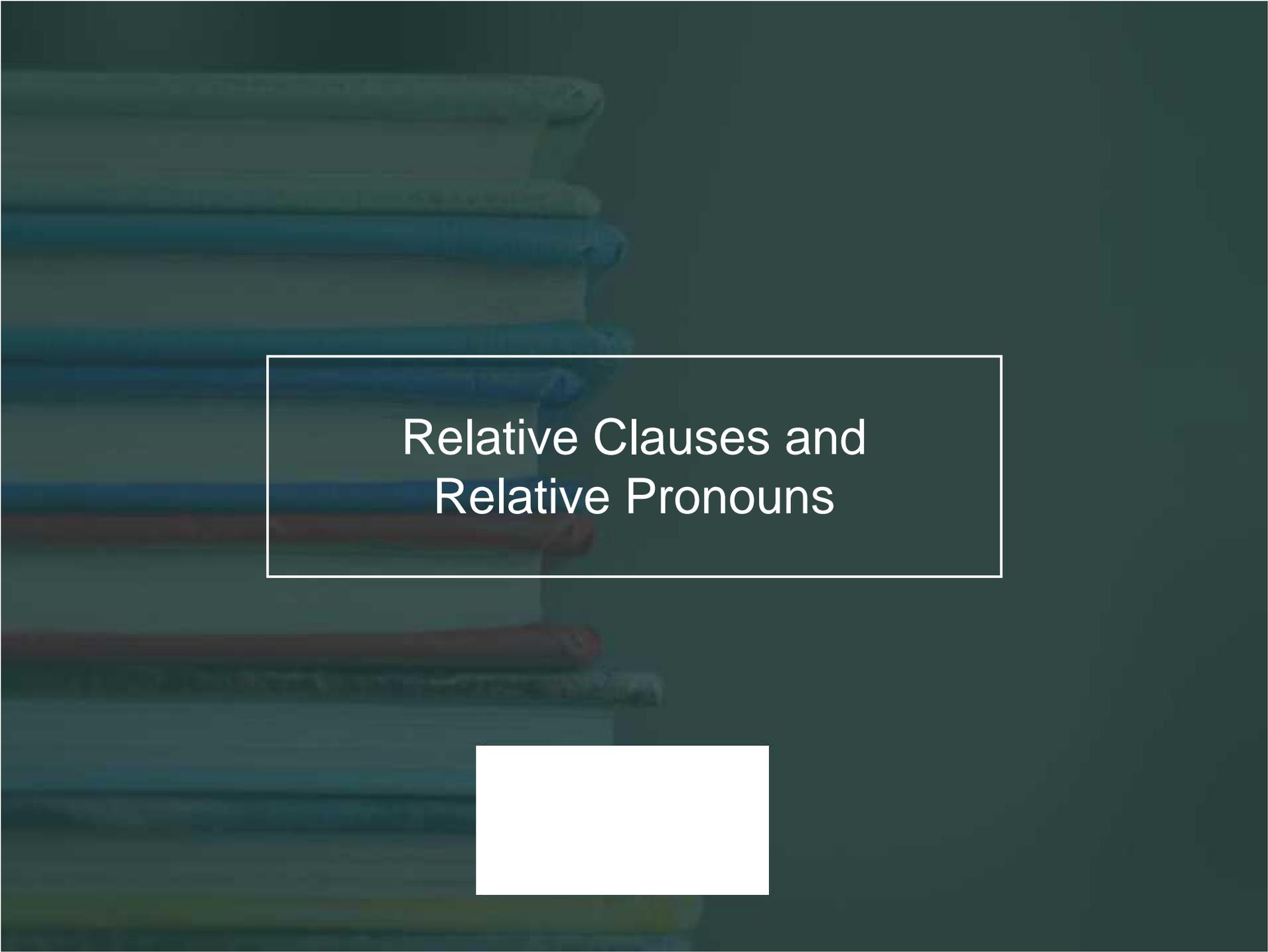
4. The Peak District, where many people like to go on holiday,
is a national park in Derbyshire.

The Peak District is a national park in Derbyshire.

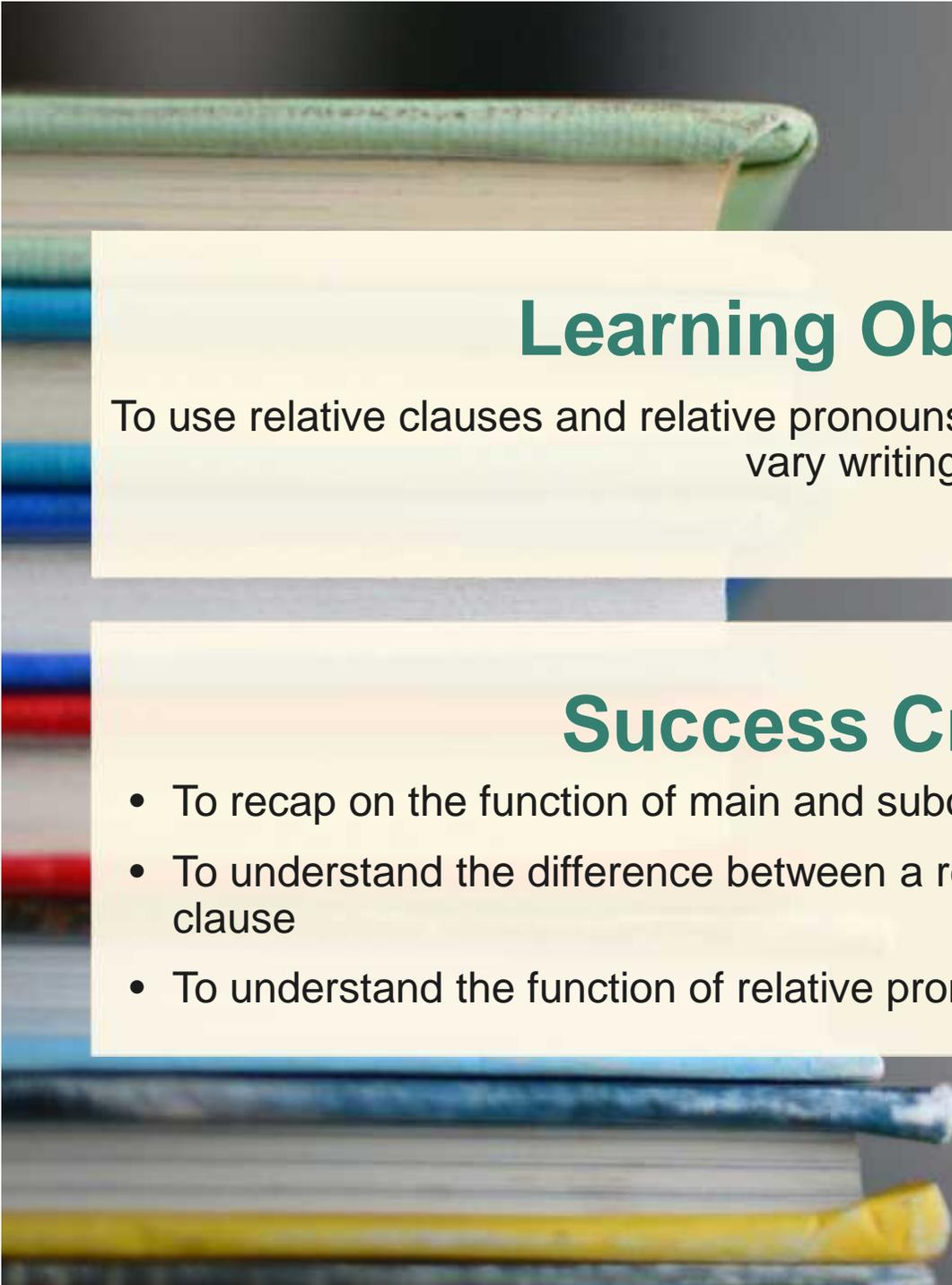
Many people like to go there on holiday.

OR

The Peak District is where many people like to go on holiday. It is a national park in Derbyshire.

A stack of several books with various colored spines (blue, green, red, grey) is visible on the left side of the slide, set against a dark teal background. The books are slightly out of focus.

Relative Clauses and Relative Pronouns

A stack of several books with various colored spines (green, blue, red, yellow) is visible on the left side of the slide. The books are slightly out of focus, emphasizing the text in the foreground.

Learning Objective

To use relative clauses and relative pronouns to create complex sentences and vary writing.

Success Criteria

- To recap on the function of main and subordinate clauses
- To understand the difference between a relative clause and a subordinate clause
- To understand the function of relative pronouns

Starter Recap

Turn to the person next to you, and in your own words explain what a main clause and subordinate clause is.

Independent

Beginning

Dependent

Sentence

Subject

Middle

Object

End

Does not make sense

More information



Starter Recap

Main Clause

A main clause contains the subject (The person or thing carrying out the action) and the object (the thing involved in the action or verb). When a main clause is used independently it is called a simple sentence.

The singer could also play the guitar.

(The singer is the subject) ('play' is the verb) ('guitar' is the object)

The Subordinate Clause

A subordinate clause can be used to extend the main clause adding more detail. It can be used at the beginning, middle or end of the sentence. When it is used in the middle it is called an embedded clause. It is completely dependent on the main clause as it does not make sense on its own.

With extreme talent, the singer could also play the guitar.

(In this example the subordinate clause has been added at the beginning of the sentence so needs a commas after it)

Relative Clauses

The **dog, who** had a huge amount of energy, was running in the park.

A type of subordinate clause.

Must begin with a relative pronoun

Must be used after the noun which it gives more information to.

Relative Pronouns

As we have just read, relative clauses always begin with relative pronouns such as:

THAT

The dog **that** stole the treat, was hiding under the table.

WHO

The student, **who** worked hard, passed the exam

WHICH

The car, **which** was being towed, had broken down.

WHERE

The park, **where** the friends went to ride their bikes at the weekend, was closed.

WHOSE

The girl, **whose** coat was missing had to go and search lost property.

WHEN

In 2008, **when** my brother was born, I was two years old.

Knowing Which Relative Pronoun to Use

Who is the relative pronoun we use to replace 'people' nouns/pronouns.

Which is the relative pronoun we use to replace 'object' nouns/pronouns.

Whose is the relative pronoun we use to replace possessive pronouns.

Where is the relative pronoun we use to replace 'place' nouns/pronouns.

When is the relative pronoun we use to replace or with 'time' noun phrases/pronouns.

That is the relative pronoun we use to replace 'people', 'animals' or 'object' nouns/pronouns.

Example:

The cat was in our garden. It lives next door.

The cat, **that** lives next door, was in our garden.

games console.

Knowing Where Relative Clause can be used

Unlike a subordinate clause, a relative clause has to be specifically positioned after the noun in the sentence.

Therefore a relative clause cannot be used at the beginning of a sentence.

Take a look at this example:

The dog was running in the park. It had a huge amount of energy.

The second sentence provides some non vital information to the first.

The dog was running in the park, **who** had a huge amount of energy.

To drop it into the first sentence, change the pronoun to a relative pronoun.
But it doesn't make sense.

The dog, who had a huge amount of energy, was running in the park.

Instead you need to locate the noun in the first sentence that the extra information adds to and drop in the relative clause straight after it.

Quick Quiz - Checking for understanding

1. The student, _____ had not done their homework, was given a detention.
2. Yesterday, _____ it was raining, my shoes got soaked through.
3. The hotel, _____ we went on holiday last year, has been flooded.
4. The hamster, _____ my sister got for her birthday, escaped from its cage.
5. The musician, _____ instrument went missing, found it later that day.
6. The shoes, _____ I bought last week, are now in the sale.

Quick Quiz - Answers

1. The student, **who** had not done their homework, was given a detention.
2. Yesterday, **when** it was raining, my shoes got soaked through.
3. The hotel, **where** we went on holiday last year, has been flooded.
4. The hamster, **that** my sister got for her birthday, escaped from its cage.
5. The musician, **whose** instrument went missing, found it later that day.
6. The shoes, **which** I bought last week, are now in the sale.

Independent Work

Now have a go at completing the remaining tasks on the **Relative Clauses and Relative Pronouns Worksheet** independently.

HELP

Main Clause: The magician made the card disappear.

Non vital Information: He was very talented.

Complex Sentence with Relative Clause:
The magician, who was very talented, made the card disappear.

Relative Pronouns: who, whose, which, when, that, where

Remember to identify the **noun** that the vital information adds to.

Relative Clauses and Relative Pronouns

Task One

Fill in the gaps in the sentences below using the correct relative pronoun.

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2. Dad, _____ lost his keys, was locked out of the house.
3. This morning, _____ I was running for the bus, I fell over.
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Task Two

Rearrange each of the sentences below to create a complex sentence with a relative clause.

Remember:

- You might have to rearrange the words in the sentence for it to make sense
- There might be more than one noun in each sentence, so you have to make sure you identify the noun which the extra information is adding to.

1. Chocolate contains 'feel-good' chemicals. It originated in South America.

2. One of the richest women in the world is The Queen. She owns several castles.

3. Australia has many unusual animals. Kangaroos come from there.

4. At 8 o'clock last night I went to bed. I had finished my homework then.

5. My favourite writer is Phillip Pullman. He wrote *Clockwork*.

6. Ostriches are the world's largest birds. They cannot fly.

7. We're having fish cakes for tea. I hate them.

8. Christopher Columbus was Italian. He is said to have discovered America.

9. Westminster Palace is in London. Parliament meets there.

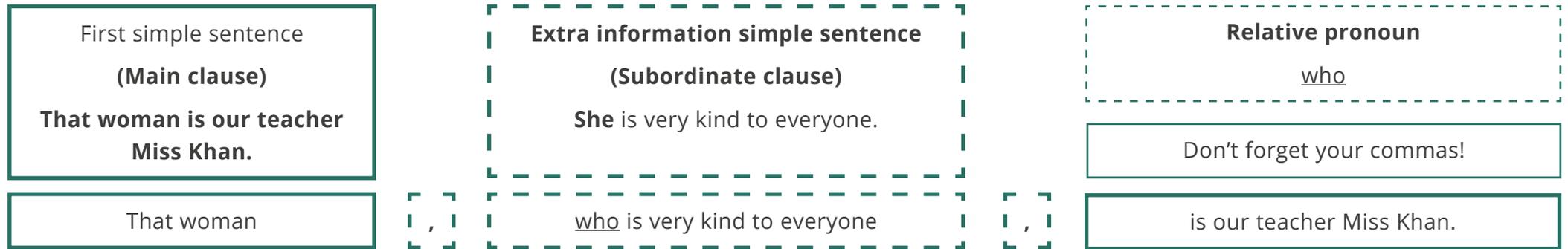
10. Britain became extremely powerful during the nineteenth century.
Victoria was queen then.



Relative Pronouns and Subordinate Clauses

Do you want to add some interesting information to your sentences? Try putting an extra information clause in the middle to make a complex sentence. You will need to replace the subject with a relative pronoun such as who, which, where, when, whose or that.

Look at this example, which shows you how to do it:



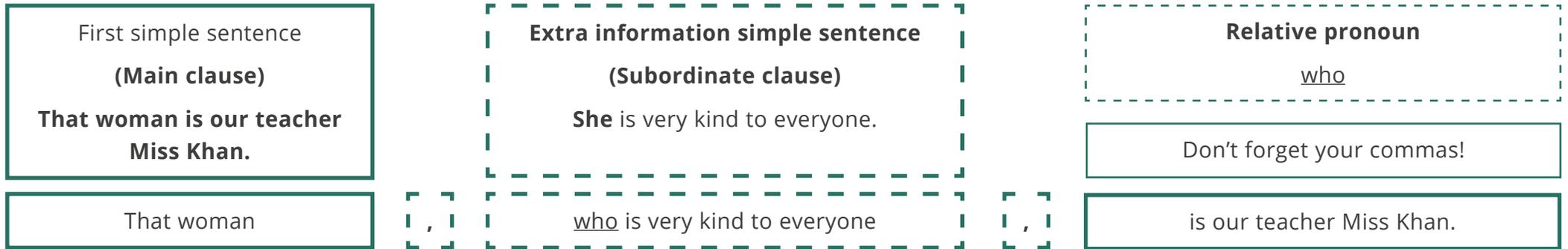
Rearrange each pair of sentences so the relative pronoun and extra information clause are in the middle. Write the new complex sentence in your book.

1. Chocolate contains 'feel-good' chemicals. Chocolate originated in South America.
2. The Queen is one of the richest women in the world. She owns several castles.
3. Australia has many unusual animals. Kangaroos come from there.
4. At 8 o'clock last night I went to bed. I had finished my homework then.
5. Phillip Pullman is my favourite writer. He wrote *Clockwork*.
6. Ostriches are the world's largest birds.
7. We're having fishcakes for tea. I hate fishcakes.
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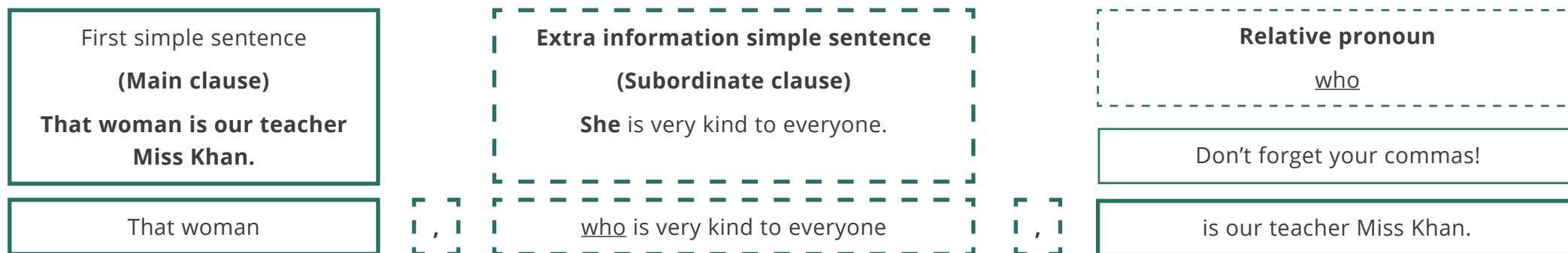
Rearrange each pair of sentences so the relative pronoun (who/which) and extra information clause are in the middle. Write the new complex sentence in your book.

1. Jellyfish _____ have no bones at all. **They** live in the sea. (which)
2. Daniel Radcliffe _____ is a very famous actor. **He** played Harry Potter. (who)
3. Polar bears _____ have translucent fur. **They** only live in the Arctic. (which)
4. My brother _____ is always mean to me. **He** is two years older. (who)
5. Phillip Pullman _____ is my favourite writer. **He** wrote *Clockwork*. (who)
6. I like marmalade _____ on toast for breakfast. **Marmalade** is a sweet spread. (which)
7. Your PE kit _____ has your name on it. **Your PE kit** is on the floor. (which)
8. Class 3H _____ are having a special treat. **They** all have 100% attendance. (who)
9. The Tooth Fairy _____ lives in an ivory castle. **She** is friends with Santa. (who)
10. I try to eat lots of fresh vegetables _____ every day. **Vegetables** are good for you. (which)

Relative Pronouns and Subordinate Clauses

Do you want to add some interesting information to your sentences? Try putting an extra information clause in the middle to make a complex sentence. You will need to replace the subject with a relative pronoun.

Look at this example, which shows you how to do it:



Rearrange each pair of sentences so the relative pronoun (in brackets) and extra information clause are in the middle. Write the new complex sentence in your book.

1. Chocolate contains 'feel-good' chemicals. Chocolate originated in South America. (which)
2. The Queen is one of the richest women in the world. She owns several castles. (who)
3. Australia has many unusual animals. Kangaroos come from there. (where)
4. At 8 o'clock last night I went to bed. I had finished my homework then. (when)
5. Phillip Pullman is my favourite writer. He wrote *Clockwork*. (who)
6. Ostriches are the world's largest birds. (that)
7. We're having fishcakes for tea. I hate fishcakes. (which)
8. Christopher Columbus was Italian. He is said to have discovered America. (who)
9. Westminster Palace is in London. Parliament meets there. (where)
10. During the 19th century Britain became extremely powerful. Victoria was queen then. (when)

Subordinate Clauses

Subordinate clauses come immediately after the noun to which they add information. For each of these sentences, you have just the main clause. Add a subordinate clause for extra detail, beginning with a relative pronoun. Look at the examples first.

e.g. I can't swim, which _____

*I can't swim, **which** means that I don't like going near water.*

e.g. Tom Daley is a famous diver, who _____

*Tom Daley is a famous diver, **who** has won many medals in his sport.*

1. Australia is a very large country, _____
2. *Jane Eyre* is a famous English novel, _____
3. I'm going to high school next year, _____
4. Tigers' fur is patterned in stripes, _____
5. Harry looks just like his dad, _____
6. Swallows migrate in the winter to Africa, _____
7. There isn't a nursery at our school, _____
8. Let me introduce you to my friend, _____
9. It seems to take ages for the clock to reach 3.20pm, _____
10. China's population is nearly 1.5 billion people, _____

Extension: Choose three of your sentences and rewrite them using a different relative pronoun. How does it change the meaning of your sentence?

Subordinate Clauses

Subordinate clauses come immediately after the noun to which they add information. They start with a relative pronoun (which, who, whose, when, where).

Cut up the sentences along the dotted lines and mix them all up.

Can you match up each main clause with its appropriate ending? Look at these examples:

My school is in Sheffield,	which is a city in South Yorkshire.	this makes sense
My school is in Sheffield,	when I get home from school.	this doesn't make sense

Polar bears come from the Arctic,	when the dinner bell rings.
My brother looks just like my dad,	who never does any homework.
Lunchtime starts at 12:30,	when my older sister was ten.
The man wearing a gold chain is the Lord Mayor,	where all the others are stacked up.
I can't eat my sandwich because it's peanut butter,	whose hair curls the same way.
Robert is an extremely lazy boy	who is a lunchtime supervisor.
We moved to Britain in 2007,	which I'm allergic to.
If you need a plaster, go and see Mr Austin,	where it is very cold and icy.
Go and put this dictionary on the shelf,	which means I don't have breakfast until 8am.
I go to swimming club every Saturday at 6am,	whose office is in the Town Hall.

Subordinate Clauses

Subordinate clauses come immediately after the noun to which they add information. For each of these sentences, you have just the main clause. Add a subordinate clause for extra detail, beginning with the relative pronoun in bold. Look at the examples first.

e.g. I can't swim, which _____

*I can't swim, **which** means that I don't like going near water.*

e.g. Tom Daley is a famous diver, who _____

*Tom Daley is a famous diver, **who** has won many medals in his sport.*

1. Australia is a very large country, **where** _____
2. *Jane Eyre* is a famous English novel, **which** _____
3. I'm going to high school next year, **when** _____
4. Tigers' fur is patterned in stripes, **which** _____
5. Harry looks just like his dad, **whose** _____
6. Swallows migrate in the winter to Africa, **where** _____
7. There isn't a nursery at our school, **which** _____
8. Let me introduce you to my friend, **whose** _____
9. It seems to take ages for the clock to reach 3.20pm, **when** _____
10. China's population is nearly 1.5 billion people, **which** _____

Extension: Choose three of your sentences and rewrite them using a different relative pronoun. How does it change the meaning of your sentence?



Relative Clauses and Relative Pronouns Teaching Ideas

Learning Objective:

To use relative clauses and relative pronouns to create complex sentences and vary writing.

Success Criteria:

- To recap on the function of main and subordinate clauses
- To understand the difference between a relative clause and a subordinate clause
- To understand the function of relative pronouns

Context

This lesson is a stand alone KS3 lesson on using relative clauses and relative pronouns in complex sentences. However, it is best taught after pupils are confident in identifying main clauses, subordinate clauses and writing complex sentences. In this lesson, pupils learn how to write complex sentences with relative clauses whilst using the correct relative pronoun.

The focus for this lesson is AO6: Candidates must use a range of vocabulary and **sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect**, with accurate spelling and punctuation. (This requirement must constitute 20% of the marks for each specification as a whole.)

Starter

Recap

You could start by reading the task out to the pupils and giving them some time to prepare some notes on a post-it note or mini whiteboard. Once pupils have prepared their notes, you could label the pupils in the pair A and B. Pupil A starts off the discussion and when they pause, pupil B needs to develop the explanation further using the key words on the board to help.

As pupils are discussing the definitions in their pairs, you could move around the room listening to the pupils and clearing up any misconceptions. You may want to select one or two groups to share their explanations with the whole class.

Main Activities

Relative Clauses

Introduce the concept of relative clauses to pupils by explaining the three rules from the PowerPoint slide. You could read out the sentence to pupils and ask if they can identify each of the rules before clicking on each box to reveal the answers.

Relative Pronouns

Next, introduce the pupils to the six common relative pronouns used in relative clauses. You could ask pupils at this point to complete the first task on the **Relative Clauses and Relative Pronouns Worksheet**. Or if you would prefer, you could ask pupils to copy down the six relative pronouns and the uses in their books before completing the worksheet later in the lesson.

Knowing Which Relative Pronoun to Use

Next you can move on to clarifying how to know which relative pronoun to use in a sentence. You can click on each of the boxes to reveal a further example of each relative pronoun being used in a sentence. Here pupils can see that the relative clause can be used both in the middle and at the end of the sentence depending on where the noun is. It would be a good opportunity here to reiterate that a relative clause cannot be used at the start of a sentence because **it must be placed after the noun**.

Quick Quiz

Next, you can conduct the quick quiz as a review of the learning so far and to check for understanding. You may want to ask pupils to copy the sentences into their books, use a mini whiteboard, or use the printed **Relative Clauses and Relative Pronouns Quick Quiz** sheets for pupils to write on. Answers are provided on the following slide for immediate feedback for pupils. This may provide a good opportunity to identify and address any misconceptions before the pupils complete their independent work.

Independent Work

Using the differentiated **Relative Clauses and Relative Pronouns Worksheet** pupils are asked to complete either the remaining tasks, or the full set of tasks if you chose to save the entire worksheet until this point in the lesson.

You could leave the PowerPoint slide on the board as there are some pointers to help pupils if they need it.

Pupils are asked to complete a series of tasks demonstrating their understanding of relative clauses and relative pronouns whilst applying the various rules learnt throughout the lesson. The worksheet is available in lower ability, middle ability and higher ability versions.

An answer sheet has also been provided.

Plenary

You could read out the complex sentence to the pupils and give them a short amount of time to read the questions. The pupils can either work in pairs to discuss their responses, write their responses down in their book or on mini whiteboards, or you may want to conduct the plenary as a whole class discussion.