

## Relative Clauses: Restrictive versus Non-Restrictive

### FORM:

head noun + restrictive relative clause

head noun + comma + non-restrictive relative clause + comma

### USE:

A **non-restrictive relative clause** is not necessary to identify the head noun it describes. It simply provides additional information. **Non-restrictive clauses** often describe one-of-a-kind nouns, proper nouns, nouns familiar through context or nouns that represent everything in a class. Like restrictive clauses, **non-restrictive clauses** can begin with subject pronouns, object pronouns or the possessive *whose*. In **non-restrictive clauses**, *which* is used instead of *that* to refer to non-human nouns. Unlike restrictive clauses, a **non-restrictive clause** is separated from the rest of the sentence with commas.

Compare:

#### **Restrictive Clause**

*Tamara was disappointed when she opened the gift that was from her boyfriend.*

**Meaning:** She received several gifts, and one of them was from her boyfriend. The clause is necessary to identify which gift is being referred to.

#### **Non-restrictive clause**

*Tamara was disappointed when she opened the gift, which was from her boyfriend.*

**Meaning:** She received one gift. The gift was from her boyfriend. The clause simply provides extra information about the gift.

**EXAMPLES:** *My teacher, who is in room 14, is very helpful.* (it is clear which teacher is being referred to because of the word “my”)  
*His mother, who is retired, lives in Florida.* (“mother” is unique, so reference is clear)  
*The Niagara River, which flows between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, has dangerous rapids.* (the Niagara River is a proper noun, so reference is clear)  
*You shouldn’t eat too much fast food, which is full of fat and sugar.* (fast food refers to a whole class of nouns)  
*The restaurant hired a new cook. The cook, who is from Thailand, loves spicy food.* (“the cook” is mentioned in the first sentence, so it is clear which cook is being referred to in the second sentence)

*Choose the correct explanation for each sentence below.*

1. The manager thanked the employees, who had stayed late to help finish the project.
  - a. All the employees had stayed late to help.
  - b. Only some employees had stayed late to help
2. The manager thanked the employees who had stayed late to help finish the project.
  - a. All the employees had stayed late to help.
  - b. Only some of the employees had stayed late to help.
3. Kyle's car is the white one which is parked next to the van.
  - a. There is only one white car in the parking lot.
  - b. There is more than one white car in the parking lot.
4. Dad opened the fridge and threw out the food, which was spoiled.
  - a. All of the food in the fridge was spoiled.
  - b. Only some of the food in the fridge was spoiled.
5. Joseph showed me the flowers that were growing in the front garden.
  - a. There were flowers growing only in the front garden.
  - b. There were flowers growing in more than one garden.
6. I ate the cookies, which were in the kitchen cupboard.
  - a. The only cookies were in the kitchen cupboard.
  - b. There were other cookies in another location.
7. He wore the blue shirt that I had bought him for his birthday.
  - a. He had only one blue shirt.
  - b. He had more than one blue shirt.

*Write sentences about the following nouns, including NON-RESTRICTIVE RELATIVE CLAUSES to define them.*

*Examples: television    Television, which became common in the 1950s, can be very educational.*  
*Marilyn Monroe    Marilyn Monroe, who died very young, was an actress and singer.*

1. the telephone

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2. Toronto

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### Advanced 3 – Exercise 41 – Relative Clauses: Restrictive versus Non-Restrictive

3. french fries

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4. my apartment/house/room (choose one)

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5. my best friend

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*Decide if the sentences require RESTRICTIVE or NON-RESTRICTIVE CLAUSES. Add commas where necessary.*

1. Our company hired a new manager. The new manager who went to university in England is very smart.
2. I have three sisters. My sister who lives in Ottawa is an engineer.
3. Rick has one brother. His brother who is a lawyer lives in Sudbury.
4. I love Vancouver which is one of the mildest cities in Canada.
5. He didn't like the city that he stayed in during his business trip.
6. Platinum which is the most expensive metal makes beautiful jewelry.
7. I prefer the ring that is made out of gold.
8. The police found the stolen car. The car which is black was hidden behind an old factory.
9. Kangaroos which keep their babies in pouches live in Australia.
10. My dog which is a poodle is very well trained.