

82 Non-defining relative clauses

Like defining relative clauses, non-defining relative clauses add extra information about something. However, this simply gives extra detail, rather than changing the sentence's meaning.

See also:

Quantity 75

Defining relative clauses 81

82.1 NON-DEFINING RELATIVE CLAUSES

In non-defining relative clauses, also known as non-restrictive relative clauses, "who" is used to refer to people. "Whom" can be used if the person is the object of the relative clause, but this is very formal.

MAIN CLAUSE NON-DEFINING RELATIVE CLAUSE

We spoke to Linda, **who had recently been mugged**.

"Who" refers to a person.



"Which" is used to refer to anything that is not a person. "That" is sometimes used instead of "which," but this is often considered wrong in non-defining relative clauses.

MAIN CLAUSE NON-DEFINING RELATIVE CLAUSE RETURN TO MAIN CLAUSE

Her necklace, **which she'd just bought**, was stolen.

"Which" refers to a thing.



FURTHER EXAMPLES

Jay, **who I used to live with**, came to stay with us for a few days.



The suspect, **whom we had been following**, was arrested.



"Whom" is only used in very formal situations.

All the burglars were arrested, **which was a great relief**.



The relative pronoun can refer to the entire previous clause.

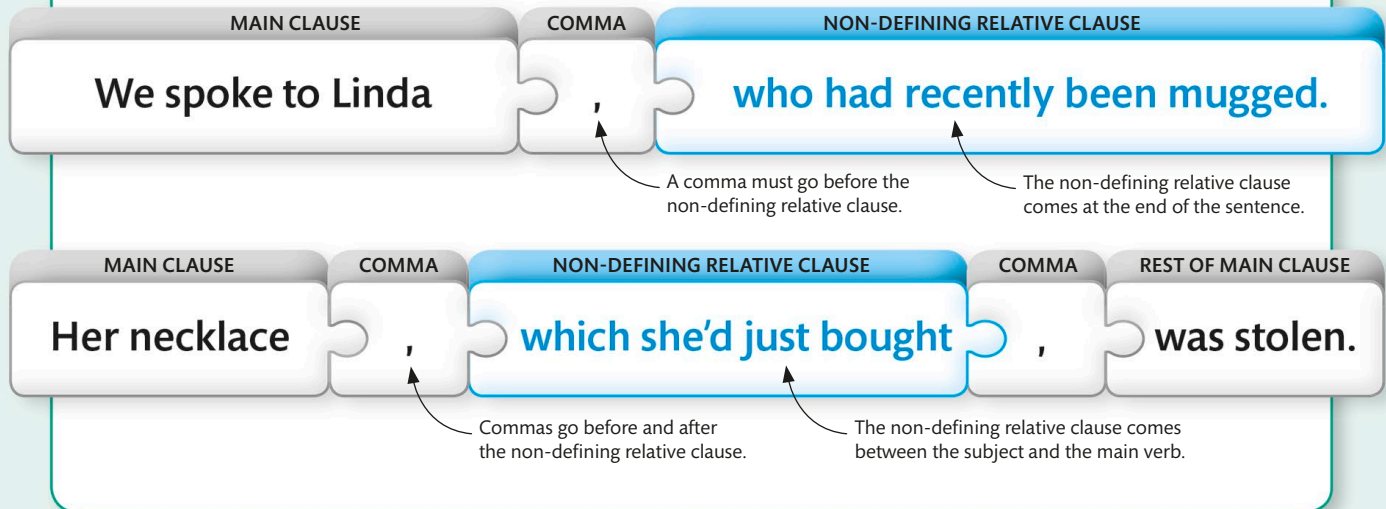
Our new house, **which is by the beach**, is beautiful.



HOW TO FORM

Non-defining relative clauses can come in the middle of a sentence, or at the end.

If the relative clause comes in the middle, commas must go either side of it. If it comes after the whole main clause, a comma must go at the end of the main clause.



82.2 QUANTIFIERS WITH NON-DEFINING RELATIVE CLAUSES

In non-defining relative clauses, quantifiers can be used to say how many people or things the relative clause refers to. In these structures, "who" becomes "of whom," and "which" becomes "of which."

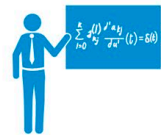
QUANTIFIER + OF + WHOM

I teach many students, **all of whom** are very talented.



QUANTIFIER + OF + WHICH

I teach many classes, **some of which** are very difficult.



FURTHER EXAMPLES

My brother and sister, **both of whom** live in Ireland, are coming to visit.



Lots of people, **many of whom** are famous, will be at the event.



I have four essays due next week, **none of which** are ready.



Tommy has three pets, **two of which** are cats.

