

Unit 91

Relative clauses (4) - 'extra information' clauses (1)

a Look again at these examples from Units 88 and 89:

- The man **who lives next door** is very friendly.
- Gerry works for a company **that makes typewriters**.
- Have you found the keys **(that) you lost**?

In these examples, the relative clauses tell us *which person or thing* (or *what kind of person or thing*) the speaker means:

'The man **who lives next door**' tells us *which* man.

'a company **that makes typewriters**' tells us *what* kind of company.

'the keys **(that) you lost**' tells us *which* keys.

But not all relative clauses are like this. For example:

- Tom's father, **who is 78**, goes swimming every day.
- The house at the end of the street, **which has been empty for two years**, has just been sold.

In these examples the relative clauses (**who is 78** and **which has been empty for two years**) do *not* tell us which person or thing the speaker means. *We already know* which person or thing is meant: 'Tom's father' and 'the house at the end of the street'. The relative clauses in these sentences give us *extra information* about the person or thing.

b In these 'extra information' relative clauses you have to use **who** for people and **which** for things. You cannot use **that** and you cannot leave out **who** or **which**.

When you write clauses like this, you have to put *commas* (,) at the beginning and at the end of the clause. Study these examples:

- Yesterday I met John, **who told me he was getting married**.
- Mr Yates, **who has worked for the same company all his life**, is retiring next month.
- She told me her address, **which I wrote down on a piece of paper**.
- The strike at the car factory, **which lasted ten days**, is now over.

Remember that we use **who/which** instead of **he/she/it/they**:

- Last night we went to Ann's party, **which we enjoyed very much**. (*not* 'which we enjoyed /t very much')

c You can also use **whose**, **whom** and **where** in 'extra information' relative clauses:

- Martin, **whose mother is Spanish**, speaks both Spanish and English fluently.
- Mr Hogg is going to Canada, **where his son has been living for five years**.
- My sister, **whom** (or **who**) **you once met**, is visiting us next week.

For more information about **whose**, **whom** and **where** see Unit 90.

See also the next unit for 'extra information' relative clauses.

When you write clauses like this, you have to put *commas* (,) at the beginning

