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Rule

You use a **relative clause** to add details to a noun. A relative clause does not make sense as a sentence on its own.

When the noun is an animal or a thing, you introduce the relative clause using one of these relative pronouns: *which*, *that*, *when* or *where*.

For example:

- *The horse, **which** was a beautiful chestnut colour, jumped over the fence.*
- *Maeve let me borrow the book **that** she bought this morning.*
- *Tuesday is the day **when** we have visitors arriving.*
- *This is the church **where** my grandparents got married.*

You can sometimes miss out the relative pronoun, especially in speech. For example:

- *Toby is eating a huge burger (which is) surrounded by chips.*
- *Have you lost the key (that) I gave you this morning?*
- *That's the week (when) I've got a dentist's appointment.*
- *This is the restaurant (where) we first met.*

**abc**

clause: a group of words that contains a subject and a verb. One or more clauses is used to build up a sentence.

noun: a word used to name a place, a person, a thing or an idea, for example: *leg*, *Scotland*, *woman*, *sadness*

relative clause: a clause that adds details to a noun but does not make sense on its own

relative pronoun: a word used to refer back to a noun, for example: *who*, *that*, *whose*



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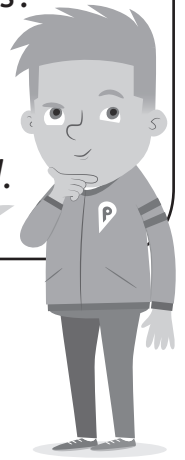
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Unit
5

Circle the relative pronoun and underline the relative clause

- 1 My guinea pig, which lives in a cage, is always trying to escape.
- 2 In August, I am going to Manchester, where my friend lives.
- 3 Do you remember the time when we hid under the bed for hours?
- 4 Mike's uncle bought a new TV that connects to the internet.
- 5 A barracuda is a sleek fish which attacks its prey at great speed.

Have a go even if you're unsure.
You learn by making mistakes.



Tick the sentence that uses a relative clause

- 1 Which way is it to the supermarket please?
- 2 The new school was supposed to open next week but it is not ready.
- 3 After half-time, the netball team played brilliantly.
- 4 That is the best joke that I've heard in ages.

Remember, relative clauses
add detail to nouns.





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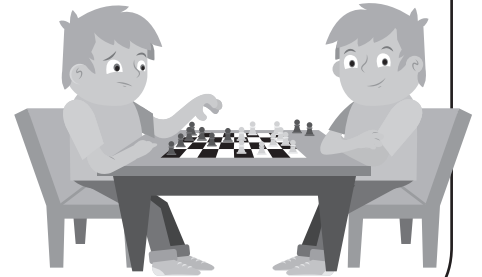
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Unit
5

Complete the sentences using the correct relative pronoun

which that when where

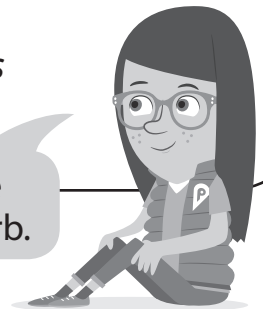
- 1 Tomorrow is a special day _____ we meet up as a family.
- 2 Aren't those the coins _____ we found in grandad's shed?
- 3 Barry travelled to the park, _____ he played chess with his friend.
- 4 I chased away the cow _____ had been eating our flowers.



Complete the sentences using a relative clause

- 1 Our favourite hotel, where _____ has gone out of business.
- 2 The car that _____ keeps breaking down.
- 3 We were lucky to see the dolphins, which _____.
- 4 2018 was the year when _____.
- 5 The table, which _____, looked as if it might collapse.

Remember that a relative clause must contain a verb.





Name _____

Class _____

Correct the pronouns

Here is a letter complaining about a horrible holiday. The writer has used formal language but has used the wrong relative pronouns to introduce each relative clause.

Underline all the incorrect pronouns in one colour. Then add the correct pronouns in a second colour above.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to complain about our recent holiday, who was a disaster from start to finish.

It was meant to be a special time which we could all relax and enjoy ourselves. We chose a country whose we had enjoyed a holiday before.

We arrived at the holiday home, that was in the middle of nowhere, and looked around. It was terrible!

The first problem when we noticed was the pool. There was an alligator living in it! Obviously, the children couldn't use a pool who had a dangerous reptile in it.

Secondly, we checked out the kitchen, where was small and flooded.

There was a strange noise too. We think there was another alligator, when was living under the sink.

That was also the moment whose we noticed a terrible smell. So, we left and booked into a motel, when was bright, fresh and dry, and we never went back.

I would like you to give us back the money who you owe us.

Yours very angrily,

Mrs Ali Gaiter

Write a reply

Now use your imagination to write a reply to Mrs Gaiter, saying sorry for her horrible holiday. Use at least three relative clauses to add interesting details.

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Activity 1

- 1 My guinea pig, which lives in a cage, is always trying to escape.
- 2 In August, I am going to Manchester, where my friend lives.
- 3 Do you remember the time when we hid under the bed for hours?
- 4 Mike's uncle bought a new TV that connects to the internet.
- 5 A barracuda is a sleek fish which attacks its prey at great speed.

Activity 2

That is the best joke that I've heard in ages. ←

The relative clause here is *that I've heard in ages*. The relative pronoun *that* refers back to the noun *joke*.

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Activity 1

- 1 Tomorrow is a special day when we meet up as a family.
- 2 Aren't those the coins that we found in grandad's shed? ←
- 3 Barry travelled to the park, where he played chess with his friend.
- 4 I chased away the cow which had been eating our flowers.

The relative clause here is *that we found in grandad's shed*. The relative pronoun *that* refers back to the noun *coins*.

Activity 2

- 1 Our favourite hotel, where we stayed last summer, has gone out of business.
- 2 The car that Dad bought for £100 keeps breaking down.
- 3 We were lucky to see the dolphins, which were playing in the waves.
- 4 2018 was the year when there was an earthquake in our village.
- 5 The table, which was old and covered in junk, looked as if it might collapse. ←

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Activity 1

- ... our recent holiday, which was a disaster ...
- ... a special time when we could all relax ...
- ... a country where we had enjoyed a holiday before ...
- ... the holiday home, which was in the middle of nowhere ...
- ... The first problem that we noticed was the pool ...
- ... a pool that had a dangerous reptile in it ...
- ... the kitchen, which was small and flooded ...
- ... there was another alligator, which was living under the sink ...
- ... the moment when we noticed a terrible smell ...
- ... a motel, which was bright, fresh and dry ...
- ... give us back the money that you owe us ...

A relative clause can often be removed without changing the meaning of the main clause.

Activity 2

Use this checklist to mark your answer.

My letter ...

- ☐ ... uses formal language
- ☐ ... says sorry for the holiday
- ☐ ... includes a greeting and sign-off
- ☐ ... correctly uses relative clauses.



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