# Relative pronouns: further information

**For the definition, construction, uses and general information about who, which, that, whose, whom and where, see other rules. Here is some further information:**

## Omission of relative pronoun

**In some defining relative clauses, it is possible to omit who, which or that.**

> **The client (who/that) we met in London is coming to see us next week.**

**This is because 'the client' is the object of the verb 'met' and the subject of the verb 'is coming'. Here are some more examples:**

> **These are the boots (which/that) I wear for hiking.**
> **These are the people (who/whom/that) I met at the conference.**
> **This is the report (which/that) I wrote after the conference.**
> **The pictures (which/that) they showed us at the presentation were really interesting.**

**In the following, we cannot omit the relative pronoun because 'My sister' is the subject of the verb 'lives'.**

> **My sister who lives in Paris is an architect.** ✔
> **My sister ~~who~~ lives in Paris is an architect.** ✖

**Similarly:**

> **I'm looking forward to meeting the client who is coming next week.** ✔
> **I'm looking forward to meeting the client is coming next week.** ✖

## Prepositions with relative pronouns

**Some English speakers believe that we should never end a sentence or a clause with a preposition. Instead, they place the preposition before which, whom or whose.**

**For example:**

> **This is a company in which many talented people work.**
> **It's an organisation to whose seminars people from around the world are invited.**

**Although this structure is acceptable in formal, written English, it sounds unnatural in**

**conversation:**

| Too formal in conversation | Preferred |
|---|---|
| The friends with whom we went on holiday are coming to dinner next week. | The friends we went on holiday with are coming to dinner next week. |
| To whom does this bag belong? | Who does this bag belong to? |
| Can you remember that Greek restaurant to which we went last year? | Can you remember that Greek restaurant we went to last year? |
| In whose team are you? | Whose team are you in? |

# What

**Do not use 'what' in relative clauses. It does not have the same meaning as 'which' and 'that'.**

> **This is the report what I wrote after the conference.** ✗
> **This is the report (which/that) I wrote after the conference.** ✓

**If there is any doubt, think of 'what' as meaning 'the thing(s) that'.**

> **This is what I wrote after the conference. ['what' = the thing that I wrote = the report]**
> **Can you tell me what you have done today? [the things that you have done]**
> **I told them what they have to bring with them to the conference. [the thing or things that they have to bring]**

**Note that it can be used either as a subject or an object. As a subject, it can take either a singular or a plural verb:**

> **What they showed us at the presentation was very interesting. What I liked most were the pictures.**

# All that

**With 'all', we do not use which. We use that in this kind of sentence:**

> **All that happened was another disagreement about the launch date - it wasn't a productive meeting.**
> **They provided all that was required.**

**But in this kind of sentence, when there is a subject and verb, it's better to omit that:**

> **All we need to do is agree on a date - then we can go home.**
> **I'm not an expert - all I know is how to switch it on and off.**

# Of which, whom, whose

**We can use which, whom and whose with numbers and quantifiers in this kind of sentence in order to avoid using two sentences and a pronoun:<?xml:namespace prefix = "o" ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:office" />**

| | |
|---|---|
| **They have three cars, one of which is a Renault.** | **= They have three cars. One of them is a Renault.** |
| **We stayed in a hotel in Paris, the name of which I can't remember.** | **= We stayed in a hotel in Paris. I can't remember the name of it.** |
| **There are two films on TV tonight, both of which I've seen before.** | **= There are two films on TV tonight. I've seen both of them before.** |
| **Matt has three brothers, two of whom are married.*** | **= Matt has three brothers. Two of them are married.** |
| **I have lots of clients in Asia, most of whom can't speak French. *** | **= I have lots of clients in Asia. Most of them can't speak French.** |
| **I deal with a company, many of whose clients are Asian.** | **= I deal with a company. Most of its clients are Asians.** |
| **She's an American writer, some of whose books have been translated into French.** | **= She's an American writer. Some of her books have been translated into French.** |

***Note that in these examples, who is not possible and whom doesn't sound too formal or unnatural as it does in other relative clauses.**

# Nominal relative clauses

**These are a kind of noun clause. They have a 'wh' word at the beginning and are found as subjects or objects in various kinds of sentences.**

**Here are some examples:**

1. **'wh' + infinitive is used after some verbs, including the following:**

   **I don't know where to have the meeting or who to invite.**
   **She informed him who to contact about the changes.**
   **They advised us where to park.**

2. **When we introduce something with the verb 'to be':**

   **This is where I'd love to live.**
   **This is who I've invited.**

3. **In questions:**

   **Do you know where to put it?**

4. **Sentences that imply a question or a lack of information:**

   **I wonder who that is.**
   **I asked her where I could find a bank.**

5. **As a subject:**

   **Where we're going to launch the new product has still to be decided.**

6. **Note that we can also make these kinds of sentences with 'what' and 'how'. For example:**

   **I found out what to do with these - let me explain.**
   **She warned us what to expect if we didn't take action immediately.**
   **He told us how to fix it.**
   **That isn't what I meant.**
   **Here's what I've prepared so far.**
   **This isn't how we usually do it.**
   **Can you remember what he said?**

**What we learned at the seminar was really useful.**

7. **When we want to be emphatic, we use a noun clause at the beginning of a sentence as a subject:**

| Emphatic | Neutral |
|---|---|
| **What I like most about him is his honesty.** | **I like his honesty most.** |
| **What I need right now is a strong cup of coffee and some chocolate.** | **I need a strong cup of coffee and some chocolate.** |
| **What I hated about that job was the long journey every morning.** | **I hated the long journey every morning in that job.** |
| **Where I'd really like to go this year is the US.** | **I'd really like to go to the US this year.** |

# Examples



**Oh no, these aren't the shoes (which/that) I ordered.**



**I'll never forget the day (that) I met him.**



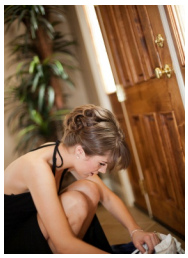
**This is what we need to consider first.**



**Nearly everything has been done. All that remains is the fitting of the new windows and doors.**



**There are seventeen people in my team, nine of whom are men and eight of whom are women.**



**I can't remember where I put my keys.**

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