

# Relative Clauses

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## DEFINING — NON-DEFINING

### HOW TO DECIDE ?

1. **MOST** relative clauses describe a given *NOUN (X)*, which can be a person or a thing. (exceptions being "*sentence* relative clauses": see backside)
2. The question you now must ask is this : Is the given noun X
  - a) clearly defined already *without* the relative clause? → **NON-DEFINING, COMMAS!**
  - b) **Or** does it **need** a definition for us to know *which X* we are talking about (if there are more than 1 X), or to know that we are talking about **X and not Y** ?  
→ **DEFINING / NO COMMAS !**

- EX.
- a) Sally, who lives next door to me, is very nice. (There is only 1 Sally, we do not wish or need to distinguish this Sally from another Sally)
  - b) Sally who lives next door to me is very nice. (There are more than one "Sallys", and only the one who lives next door to me is very nice. We want and need to distinguish this Sally from other "Sallys", who are different from this one.)

### THE MOST FREQUENT SENTENCE TYPES FOR *DEFINING RELATIVE CLAUSES* :

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- 1 **the + noun + who/which/that / - does/did/is/was x does/did/is/was y**  
ex. The man who/that is going to marry Mary is Bruce. The man (who/that) I told you about is Bruce.
- 2 **pl nouns + who/which/that / - do/are x do/are y**  
ex. People who/that live in Iran aren't free. Houses which/that have a flat roof always leak.
- 3 **a + noun + who/which/that / - does/is x does/is y**  
ex. A person who/that likes music is more harmonious. A country which/that kills its own people is insane.
- 4 **all + pl nouns + who/which/that / - do/are x do/are y**  
ex. All the people who/that go to London want to see the tower . All the houses (which/that) I saw in Britain were built from bricks.
- 5 **none of + noun + who/which/that / - do/does/are/is x do/does/are/is y**  
ex. None of the people (who/that) I know are Russian. None of the computers (which/that) I was shown satisfied me.
- 6 **somebody / nothing / everywhere / not ... anyhow + who/which/that / - does/is x does/is y**  
ex. Somebody who/that smokes takes more risks than other people. Nowhere (where/that) I ever went it was as nice as here.
- 7 **It is/was A (not B) who/which/that / - does/did x**  
ex. It was Henry who/that farted, not Arthur. It is the big cities (which/that) I like best (not the small ones).

**THIS MAY GUIDE YOU TO THE CORRECT USE OF RELATIVE CLAUSES !**