

Relative Clauses

Introduction

TASK

Look at the example sentences. Do you notice any differences between a and b?



1. Example
 1. There was a bird which flew past my window.
 2. The bird, which was about 2 metres long, scared me a lot.
2. Example
 1. At the bus stop there was a man who was singing loudly.
 2. This man, who also didn't wear any trousers, annoyed many of the people there.

In the two **a-sentences** the information in the relative clauses is necessary for a complete understanding of the sentences.

In the **b-sentences** the relative clauses add extra information that is not necessary to understand the rest of the sentence.

- a: defining relative clauses
- b: non-defining relative clauses

Defining and non-defining relative clauses



A **defining relative clause** adds necessary information to the main clause. Without it, the main clause would be incomplete. There are no commas.

A **non-defining relative clause** adds extra (zusätzlich) information to the main clause. It is not necessary and the main clause is complete without it. There are commas between the main clause and the relative clause.

Practice

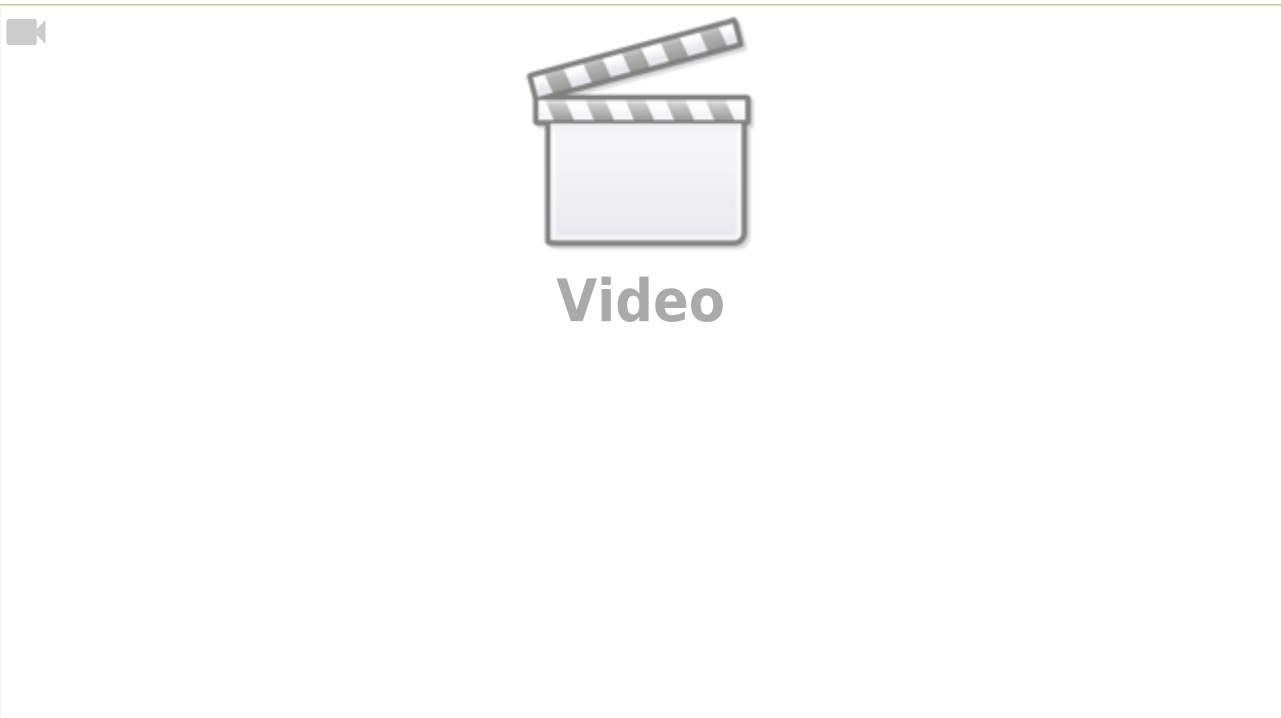


Here are some more sentences. Try to figure out which ones contain defining and which ones are non-defining relative clauses.

1. John Muir was one of the people who fought against the dam project.
2. John Muir, who was born in Scotland, fought to make Yosemite a national park.
3. One out of 25 people who live in the USA are there illegally.
4. Mexicans, who usually do unskilled work, make up a large part of the illegal immigrants.
5. Some people want to get tough on illegal immigrants, who they think should be arrested.
6. Most immigrants who want to cross the border manage to do it.

1. "who fought against the dam project": **defining** relative clause
2. "who was born in Scotland": **non-defining** relative clause
3. "who live in the USA": **defining** relative clause
4. "who usually do unskilled work": **non-defining** relative clause
5. "who they think should be arrested": **non-defining** relative clause
6. "who want to cross the border": **defining** relative clause

Videos





Video



Video



Video



Video

Exercises

- [Bestimmende und nicht bestimmende Relativsätze](#)
- [Relativpronomen who, which, whose und that](#)
- [Relative Clauses \(Relativsätze\) - Explanation and exercises](#)
- [Relative clauses - Explanation and exercises](#)

Contact Clauses

- [Contact clauses - Relativsätze ohne Relativpronomen](#)
- [Bildung von Contact Clauses](#)