



Remember to watch the video first! Then read the conversation between Sophie and Anita, an English language student who Sophie met in Peru. Sophie's helping Anita understand how to use relative clauses.



**Grammar
Snacks**

We use relative clauses to describe or give extra information about something we have already mentioned. We often use relative pronouns (e.g. *who*, *where*, *that*, *which*, *whose*) to introduce relative clauses.



Anita

What are relative clauses and why do we use them?

A clause is a group of words containing a verb. Relative clauses are a way of giving more information about a person, thing, place, event, etc. We often use them to avoid repeating information.

*The Uros people make fires. **Their fires are used for cooking.***
= *The Uros people make fires, **which they use for cooking.***



OK, so there the relative pronoun is 'which' and it refers back to 'the fires' and 'which they use for cooking' is the relative clause.

That's right, *which* is used for things (never for people). There are a lot of other relative pronouns: *who* (for people), *that* (for a thing or a person), *where* (for a place), *whose* (for possession) and *when* (for a time).



Sophie



What are defining relative clauses?

They are clauses that you need in the sentence for it to make sense.

*The people **who live here** have had the same kind of lifestyle for hundreds of years.*

If I said 'The people have had the same kind of lifestyle for hundreds of years', you wouldn't know which people I was talking about.





There are no commas before and after the clause.

No, not with defining relative clauses.

*The islanders pick the tall reeds **that grow at the sides of the lake** and use them to make the islands.*



OK, so what about non-defining relative clauses?

We use those to give extra information, which isn't absolutely necessary. We use commas to separate them from the rest of the sentence, unless they come at the end of the sentence, when we use a comma and a full stop.

*That grey thing, **which you can see on the roof there**, isn't very traditional.*

*The video's from yesterday, **when she was on the Peruvian side of Lake Titicaca**.*

*This is Sophie, **whose blog you've been reading**.*



OK, got it, I think. Is there anything else that I need to know?

Ah, you just used a relative clause with *that*. We can use *that* instead of *who* or *which* in defining clauses, not non-defining clauses.

So this grammar snack, *which has been very interesting*, has taught me everything *that I need to know about relative clauses*.

OK, it's taught you nearly everything you need to know.



Watch the video on our website!

