Section 19  relative pronouns

page 253

language notes
The grammar of relative clauses depends to some extent on whether the clause is ‘identifying/defining’ or ‘non-identifying/non-defining’ (terminology varies). At this level, we simply deal with the more common ‘identifying’ type.

possible further activities

Reading  The purpose of these introductory texts is simply to give examples of the use of relative pronouns. Students don’t need to do anything except read them, or parts of them, with a dictionary.

pages 254–255

language notes
Relative pronouns in English (and most other European languages) do two things: they act as conjunctions, joining two clauses together, and they replace the subject or object of the second clause. In other languages, these two functions may be performed by separate words:

*There’s a man at the door that he wants to speak to you.*
*This is the car which I would like to buy.*

The distinction between who (for people) and which for things may not be matched in the students’ language(s):
*Is there a train who goes directly to Glasgow?*
*We had a teacher which couldn’t explain things very well.*

possible further activities

‘Who’ or ‘which’? Say a series of article + noun expressions for people and things; students reply ‘who’ or ‘which’ as appropriate. Like this:
‘the man’ – ‘who’
‘a chair’ – ‘which’
‘a girl’ – ‘who’
‘the house’ – ‘which’

Keep it moving, but not so fast that students get confused.

Personalisation  Get students to complete sentences beginning ‘I like people who …’ and ‘I don’t like people who …’.

page 256

possible further activities

Definitions and vocabulary expansion  Get students to suggest animals they’d like to know the names of (or ask students to find the names in their dictionaries). For each animal, they write a definition using that (help with vocabulary as necessary).
‘Cow: an animal that gives milk.’

Alternatively: they give you definitions with that and you tell them the names of the animals.
‘An animal that has a long neck and lives in Africa.’ ‘Giraffe.’

You can use the same activity, for example, to teach the names of machines.
‘A machine that washes plates and cups.’ ‘Dishwasher.’
language notes
Dropping relative pronouns is strange for speakers of most languages. It can add to the comprehension difficulty often caused by relative clauses, which can put together things that don’t belong together and separate things that do:
*The car Andrew has just bought keeps breaking down.*

possible further activities
**Personalisation** Ask students to write a few interesting sentences beginning:
- A man/woman/girl/boy I know …
- A man/woman/girl/boy I met once …

**Internet** Ask them to look for interesting sentences on the internet beginning in the same way.

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language notes
The preposition-final structure will be strange for most students (like questions that end in prepositions – see page 111). Beginners may find it easier to produce sentences with prepositions before relative pronouns, but these are generally unnatural in speech:
*There’s the man about whom I was talking.*

possible further activities
**Definitions** Get students to write definitions for some everyday objects, beginning ‘A thing that you …’ or ‘Things that you …’ and ending in prepositions (help with vocabulary as necessary).
- ‘a pen’ – ‘a thing that you write with’
- ‘keys’ – ‘things that you open doors with’
Possible objects: a chair, a bed, a knife, a toy, a window, a toothbrush, soap, a picture.
This could be used for vocabulary expansion by bringing in less well known objects like a lawnmower, a saw, a broom, …

**Personalisation** Ask everybody to write an interesting sentence beginning ‘A boy/girl I went/go to school with …’
- ‘A girl I went to school with is a world-famous rock singer.’

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language notes
Some languages use the equivalent of *what* in certain cases where English uses *that*:
*Everything what she said was wrong.*
*The only thing what I want is a long holiday.*

possible further activities
**Saying and thinking** Get students to suggest ways of completing the following list:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What people say</th>
<th>What they think</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It's nice to see you.</td>
<td>It isn't nice to see you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I really like your hair.</td>
<td>Your hair looks terrible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you very much.</td>
<td>..................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Come in.</td>
<td>..................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love you.</td>
<td>..................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do have some more coffee.</td>
<td>..................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your little girl sings beautifully.</td>
<td>..................</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

➔ Section 19 continues
Do people tell the truth? Ask students to complete one or more of the following sentences:

- What people say is usually ... what they think.
- What politicians say is usually ... what they think.
- What small children say is usually ... what they think.
- What I say is usually ... what I think.

Help with suitable expressions if necessary ('very different from', 'a bit different from', 'the opposite of', 'not at all' ...).