

Unit 11 Modifying Nouns with Adjective Clauses

ADJECTIVE CLAUSES (SAMPLE PARAGRAPHS)

READ THE NEXT TWO PARAGRAPHS AND UNDERLINE THE ADDITIONS IN THE SECOND

Most people are unaware that Elizabeth Borden was a fine woodcarver. Elizabeth could make the most wonderful wood carvings with a two-edged wood carving tool. Using this implement she made lovely portraits of friends and relatives in wood. On father's day, she sculpted a truly remarkable bust of her father. When neighbors would pass the Borden house they would often hear the sound of this early American artist furiously working away at her passion. Even when Elizabeth lived away from home temporarily, she continued to busy herself with her woodcarving hobby. She made two beautifully-fitted and embellished boxes for her parents. Elizabeth finally moved for good from the small, simple country home of her birth to live in the city.

Most people are unaware that Elizabeth Borden, who is now generally believed to have been responsible for the deaths of her mother and father, was a fine woodcarver. Elizabeth, whom all her friends and neighbors affectionately called Lizzy, could make the most wonderful wood carvings with a two-edged wood carving tool that some have claimed to be similar in size and shape to a battle axe. Using this implement, with which she reportedly gave her mother forty whacks, she made lovely portraits of friends and relatives in wood. On father's day, she sculpted a truly remarkable bust of her father to whom legend has it she gave forty-one whacks. When neighbors would pass the Borden house where bloodcurdling screams were sometimes heard, they would often hear the sound of this early American artist furiously working away at her passion. Even when Elizabeth, who was indicted for two counts of murder, lived away from home temporarily, she continued to busy herself with her woodcarving hobby. She made two beautifully-fitted and embellished boxes for her parents in which they were finally laid to rest. Elizabeth, whose acquittal made front page headlines, finally moved for good from the small, simple country home of her birth to live in the city.

If you have underlined the differences carefully, you will find that the underlined portions of the sentences are adjective clauses beginning with an adjective clause subordinating conjunction.

Adjective Clauses

In this unit, you will again be working with structures that modify nouns—adjective clauses. Like appositives, adjective clauses are a good way to add descriptive details to nouns. The following sentences contain adjective clauses:

The student who aced his exam was happy.

The exam, which covered six chapters of trigonometry, determined the final course grade.

We call the underlined structures "adjective clauses" because, like simple adjectives, they describe nouns. In the above sentences, the adjective clause, *who aced his exam*, describes *student*, and the adjective clause, *which covered six chapters of trigonometry*, describes *exam*.

We call the underlined structures "clauses" because they are made up of a subject—*who*, *that*, or *which*—and a verb. But they are dependent clauses, so they can't be sentences by themselves. And like other modifiers of more than one word, they come after the nouns they modify.

Adjective clauses are clauses that modify nouns. They either identify (restrictive clause) or give background information (non-restrictive clause) about the nouns they modify:

I never found the person who stole my coat.
(Identifies which person)

The first baseman, who batted .302 last year, is their best player
(Gives background information about the first baseman because the first baseman has already been identified as a *first* baseman)

Most adjective clauses can be seen as transformations of complete sentences.

I found a store / that was very reliable.
it was very reliable.

Mary had a friend / who enjoyed sports.
he / she enjoyed sports.

Mary had an aunt / whom she visited on holidays.
she visited her on holidays.

He wrote a book / in which there were lurid scenes (or)
which there were lurid scenes in.

there were lurid scenes in it.

Mary had an aunt / whose wealth was limitless.
her wealth was limitless.

Chief Subordinators

who	subject of clause: refers only to people (he, she, they)
whom	object of verb or preposition within clause: refers only to people (him, her, them)
which	subject of clause or object of verb or preposition within the clause; refers only to things (it, they, them)
that	subject of clause or object of verb within clause; refers to things or people (he, she they; him, her, them; it)
whose	possessive adjective within clause; refers to things or people (his, her, their; its)
where	substitutes for “there”; can modify nouns of location
when	substitutes for “then”; can modify nouns of time

Most common adjective clause problems:

1. Not using adjective clauses; putting identifying or background information in independent clauses:

I sat staring at my grandfather’s picture. It almost always makes me think of things like love and kindness and presents on my birthday.

I sat staring at my grandfather’s picture, which almost always makes me think of things like love and kindness and presents on my birthday.

2. Confusion between who and whom:

It saddened me to be betrayed by a person whom I had always thought was my friend.

3. Mis-use of where:

If we discover even one incident where the unconscious drives the conscious to rationalize, then we will be forced to rethink Freud’s concept of rationalization. (should be in which)

4. Mis-use of the preposition + which construction (in which, from which, etc.)

He decided to choose the course of action in which he would get the most pleasure from. (in should be from; from should be deleted)

Shaping Sentences to Show Relationships: Adjective Clauses

In this lesson, you will add clauses to nouns. Unlike a phrase, a clause contains both a subject and a verb. In the exercises below, you will find pairs of short sentences. You are to make the second sentence of each pair into an adjective clause modifying the underlined noun in the first sentence. In each case, find the word in the second sentence that either repeats or refers to the underlined noun and change it into *who* if the underlined noun is a person word or *that* or *which* if it is a thing word. Here are some examples:

1. The woman is my aunt.

She bought me a new kangaroo.

Solution: The woman who bought me a new kangaroo is my aunt.

Explanation: The word in the second sentence that refers to woman is she.

She is a person word, so it is replaced by *who*.

2. The box contained the birthday present.

It fell off the table.

Solution: The box that fell off the table contained the birthday present.

Explanation: The word in the second sentence that refers to box is it. It is a thing word and so is replaced by *that* or *which*.

3. The plan is really interesting.

You proposed it.

Solution: The plan which you proposed is really interesting.

Explanation: The word in the second sentence that refers to plan is it. It is a thing word and so is replaced by *that* or *which*. But one cannot say *The plan/you proposed which / is really interesting*, and so one must move the word *which* to the front of the clause.

Exercise

In the first five pairs of sentences below, the noun in the first sentence that the adjective clause is to modify is underlined, and the noun or pronoun in the second sentence that refers to it and must be changed to *who*, *that*, or *which* is also underlined.

Cars and the Environment

1. George bought a used car.
It gave him endless problems.
2. He took it to a mechanic.
He told him it would cost \$450 to fix it.
3. George bought a car.
He thought he would like it.
4. But now he owns one.
He hates it.
5. However, he has found a mechanic.
He does excellent work.
6. A problem is the harmful effect of automobiles on the environment.
We have to face this problem.
7. Cars have a particularly damaging effect.
The cars are not maintained properly.
8. But the gases still create serious atmospheric problems.
Even new cars emit these gases.
9. The cars are primarily responsible for the smog in most of our cities.
People drive these cars to and from work and around town on errands.
10. However, the pollution comes from other sources as well.
We suffer from this pollution.

Adjective Clauses: Special Rule 1 (Restrictive and Non-restrictive clauses)

Sometimes adjective clauses should have commas around them and sometimes they should not.

Let us begin by calling these clauses *comma clauses* (for those with commas around them) and *no-comma clauses* (for those without). Most adjective clauses are no-comma clauses, and **whenever you are in doubt about whether to put commas around an adjective clause, follow one simple rule—don't.**

Whether or not we put commas around adjective clauses has *nothing whatever to do with the content of the clause, with what the clause says*. It is the noun the clause modifies that determines whether the clause will be a comma clause or a no-comma clause. If the noun requires no further identification for us to know who or what it refers to, the clause following it will be a comma clause. Here are some typical kinds of nouns that usually produce comma clauses after them:

1. Proper nouns:

Mary Smith, who works night and day, is an excellent lawyer.

The **Golden Gate Bridge**, which spans the entrance to San Francisco Bay, is by no means the longest bridge in the world.

2. Any noun indicating all members of a class of things or group of people or other living creatures:

Copper, which has numerous important uses, is growing scarce.

Homeowners hate **crabgrass**, which spoils the appearance of their lawns.

Japanese automobiles, which are very well built, have captured an important share of the American market.

Let us salute the **crocodile**, which has survived from the Age of Reptiles.

The **English**, who have produced some of the world's greatest writers, have not produced many first-rate painters.

3. Nouns preceded by possessive words usually will produce comma clauses following them:

George's houseboat, which is a wreck, is no place to bring people you like.

4. If the adjective clause just refers to some of the members of the class, the purpose of the clause is to identify those particular members and not to give background information on all of the members. So then it should not have commas.

American lawyers, who charge outrageous fees, are a disgrace.
(indicates that all American lawyers charge outrageous fees)

American lawyers who charge outrageous fees are a disgrace.
(indicates that only some charge outrageous fees and that only those are a disgrace)

Exercise

In the following exercise, decide whether the adjective clauses, which are underlined, should have commas around them and what rule above applies to the situation. Write the number of the rule under the sentence.

1. Mark Twain who is probably America's greatest humorist came from a small town in Missouri.
2. Wolverines which live only in the far north are generally considered to be among the most intelligent of animals.
3. Many animals which are not as intelligent as the wolverine have adapted better to living near human beings.
4. Most people enjoy the paintings of Winslow Homer which are rich in color and often quite dramatic.
5. The boulevards of Paris which are spacious and tree lined are among the most beautiful streets in the world.
6. These broad straight boulevards are surrounded by narrow little streets that twist and turn.
7. My neighborhood which has both broad and narrow streets does not quite have the same charm as most of Paris.
8. The *Journal of Unforeseeable Disasters* which I subscribe to provides my favorite bed-time reading.
9. I am a great admirer of women athletes who are as dedicated to their sports as men without, on the whole, getting the same monetary rewards.
10. I have become a fan of lightly flavored mineral water which is both thirst quenching and tasty.

In the exercises in this unit, you will be joining two sentences by making the second one into an adjective clause. Follow these steps:

1. Find the word in the second sentence that either repeats or refers to the underlined noun in the first sentence.
2. Cross out the word that you found and change it to *who*, *that*, or *which*.
3. Change the second sentence into an adjective clause and place it in the first sentence after the noun it modifies.

The following are examples and explanations for the combined sentences using adjective clauses.

- EXAMPLE A: Richard Nixon was finally elected in 1968.
who ~~Nixon~~ tearfully lost his 1960 bid for president.
- SOLUTION: Richard Nixon, who tearfully lost his bid for President, was finally elected in 1968.
- EXPLANATION: *Nixon is* repeated in the second sentence and is a person, so *Nixon* can be replaced with *who*.
- EXAMPLE B: Ronald Reagan was elected president in 1980.
who He served as California's governor for eight years.
- SOLUTION: Ronald Reagan, who served as California's governor for eight years, was elected president in 1980.
- EXPLANATION: *He* in the second sentence refers back to *Reagan* in the first sentence, *He* is a person word, so it can be replaced with *who*.

Exercise One Nirvana and the Law

In each of the sentence pairs below, a noun or pronoun in the second sentence either repeats or refers to a noun in the first sentence. Change the noun in the second sentence to *who*, *which*, or *that* so that the second sentence can become an adjective clause modifying a noun in the first sentence. Also decide whether you will be using comma clauses or no-comma clauses **and why**.

EXAMPLE: My good friend Colleen likes to engage in illegal activity.
She claims to be a daredevil by nature.

SOLUTION: My good friend Colleen, who claims to be a daredevil by nature, likes to engage in illegal activity.

1. The illegal activity may require that Colleen show her I.D.
It involves her red Triumph Spitfire.
2. Often, Colleen must try to avoid the police.
They try to catch her.
3. To get away with her scheme, Colleen must thoroughly plan a course.
It covers half the city.
4. She must also follow her plan carefully to get to her destination.
She will reach it without getting caught if she is lucky.
5. To add to her daring feat, Colleen dons a tight black body suit and matching goggles.
The feat calls for the appropriate clothing.

6. She also wears a red scarf around her neck.
The scarf matches her Spitfire.

 7. As Colleen covers her route, she listens to loud music.
The music reaches deep within her psyche.

 8. During her excursion, Colleen reaches an altered state.
Colleen needs no drugs.

 9. Yet through it all, she remains alert enough to watch out for others.
The others are going slower than the speed limit.
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Exercise Two The Lonesome Cowboy

In the last exercise with sentence pairs, you reduced some sentences to adjective clauses by looking for repeated nouns or pronoun referents like *she* or *it* that could be replaced with *who*, *which*, or *that*, and then you modified nouns with your new adjective clauses. The following exercise is similar, but it introduces another common signal for reducing some sentences to adjective clauses.

EXAMPLE: Many people romanticize American cowboys.
 These cowboys rode the cattle trails after the Civil War.

SOLUTION: Many people romanticize American cowboys who rode the
 cattle trails after the Civil War.

EXPLANATION: We have turned the second sentence into an adjective
 clause modifying cowboys in the first sentence. The signal
 here is the word *these* + a repeated noun. Also watch for
 the signals *this*, *that*, and *those*.

1. Cowboys actually were overworked and underpaid.
 These cowboys rode endless miles in rough weather.

2. Cowboys rarely got enough sleep.
 Those cowboys worked 18 hours a day, every day of the week.

3. Cowboys ate a boring daily diet.
 This diet usually consisted of beans, bacon, cornbread, and coffee.

4. Cowboys often sang songs around campfires.
 Those songs revealed their loneliness and hard lives.

5. But cowboys rarely complained.
Those cowboys had a lot to complain about.

 6. Each cowboy found a way to entertain himself.
This cowboy couldn't have a normal family life.

 7. Some cowboys bought magazines.
Cowboys read and passed along these magazines.

 8. A cowboy's prize possession was his hat.
He wore that hat during meals and sometimes to bed.

 9. Cowboys also valued their boots.
These boots often cost two months' wages.

 10. People still commonly believe that cowboys were heroes.
These heroes stand for the freedom of the Wild West.
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Special Rule: Who / Whom

So far, you have used adjective clauses that begin with *who*, *that*, or *which*. Although you may need to refer to the previous section for some of the following exercises, this section will primarily clarify the difference between *who* and *whom*. Although both *who* and *whom* begin adjective clauses that modify person nouns, each has a separate grammatical function in the adjective clause it begins.

Take, for example, the following sentences containing adjective clauses:

My brother, [*who* married a crazy woman], has one crazy baby.
My sister-in-law, [*whom* my mother dislikes], is a fanatic.

Why do we use *who* in one adjective clause and *whom* in the other?

If we take the adjective clauses and turn them into sentences by replacing *who* or *whom* with a personal pronoun, we have the answer:

ADJECTIVE CLAUSE:

(my brother)
who married a crazy woman

(my sister-in-law)
whom my mother dislikes

SENTENCE:

He married a crazy woman.

My mother dislikes her.

EXPLANATION: The pronoun you placed in your sentence signals you to use

WHO for subject pronouns:

HE
SHE
WE
THEY

WHOM for object pronouns:

HIM
HER
US
THEM

REVIEW: To decide whether to use *who* or *whom*, follow these steps:

1. Identify and underline the words that make up the adjective clause.
2. Turn the adjective clause into a sentence by replacing *who* or *whom* with a personal pronoun from the previous list.
3. If you use a subject pronoun, use *who*, but if you use an object pronoun, use *whom*.

EXAMPLE: 1. Our postman, who/whom is usually prompt, arrived late.
2. He is usually prompt.
3. He= *who*.

Exercise Three Belinda and Sedrick

Follow the steps in the previous review and circle your choice of *who* or *whom*. In the first four sentences, step 2 is done for you.

1. Belinda, (who/whom) shaved her head, volunteered to model for her art class.
(She shaved her head.)
 2. Sedrick, (who/whom) Belinda secretly adored, was a student in the same class.
(Belinda secretly adored him.)
 3. When she entered the room, Belinda, (who/whom) sported butcher knives as earrings, turned all eyes but Sedrick's.
(She sported butcher knives as earrings.)
 4. Sedrick, (who/whom) Belinda had asked out, had decided to play hard to get.
(Belinda had asked him out.)
 5. While the rest of the class sketched Belinda, Sedrick, (who/whom) was sketching a skull, flirted with the girl next to him.
 6. Suddenly, Belinda, (who/whom) wished Sedrick would notice her, suddenly broke into tears.
 7. So Sedrick raised his hand and complained about Belinda, (who/whom) he wanted to embarrass.
 8. The instructor, (who/whom) wanted to embarrass Sedrick, forced Sedrick to join Belinda in front of the class.
 9. As their classmates sketched and giggled, Belinda and Sedrick, (who/whom) by now felt ridiculous, were asked to arm wrestle.
 10. Sedrick, (who/whom) Belinda beat in arm wrestling, took Belinda out to lunch after class.
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Exercise Four Blind Date

In this exercise, note what noun or pronoun in the second sentence either repeats or refers to a noun in the first sentence. Then turn the second sentence into an adjective clause beginning with *who* or *whom* and use it to modify the noun in the first sentence.

EXAMPLE: Baxter had no plans for celebrating his 21st birthday.
He had a tall, muscular body and dark curly hair.

SOLUTION: Baxter, who had a tall muscular body and dark curly hair, had no plans for celebrating his 21st birthday.

1. So Baxter decided to let his best friend Max fix him up with a blind date.
Max had a taste for long-legged, romantic women.
2. Max spent a great deal of time calling 976 "party line" numbers.
Bax had known him for 15 years.
3. While talking on the line about a week before, Max had spoken with a young woman.
He thought she would be the ideal date for Baxter.
4. The woman said that she would be happy to meet Baxter.
The woman referred to herself as Cinderella.
The woman called him her Prince Charming.
5. So Max arranged for Bax to meet Cinderella the following Wednesday.
Bax was incredibly nervous.

6. Max drove Bax to the meeting place, a local Denny's.
Bax did not have a car.

 7. Max literally had to shove Bax into the restaurant.
Three 75-year-old ladies roaming around the parking lot pinched Bax.

 8. Bax finally sat down on the yellow vinyl couch near the door.
Bax had been twisting his burgundy bow tie for hours.

 9. Baxter grew impatient after watching nine single women walk in.
The women caused his heart to palpitate.

 10. Finally, his Cinderella wiggled through the door.
Cinderella sent his senses roaring with her purple leather mini-dress.
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Exercise Five Rio

Like appositives, adjective clauses enable writers to effectively join their ideas and show their readers what they mean. So it makes sense not only to practice joining ideas using adjective clauses, but also to create adjective clause modifiers.

Below is a hypothetical mystery story in which there are nouns that could be made more specific with adjective clauses, although you might also want to use a few appositives. The nouns to be modified are underlined, and blanks for your modifiers are provided.

One day, Matilda sat in a cafe, sipping cappuccino and talking with her friend Jacquita,

(1)_____ Matilda was telling Jacquita about her husband Merv, (2)_____.

Apparently, Merv had turned into a very mysterious man, (3)_____, and Matilda suspected that he was now involved in some criminal activity

(4)_____ Recently, Merv brought home some very disgusting friends (5)_____.

And he purchased three expensive new cars, (6)_____.

But when Matilda, (7)_____, questioned Merv about his activities, he ran out the front door. Despondent, Matilda knew that her best friend Jacquita would know how to solve the problem, (8)_____.

Jacquita recommended that Matilda do one of two things: hire a private detective to find out what Merv had gotten himself into or sell the cars and run away to Rio. Matilda decided to hire a detective (9)_____.

So the next day, the detective she'd hired followed Merv to work and to his favorite hangout,

(10)_____. But unfortunately, the detective lost Merv when Merv entered a K-Mart. When the detective tried to call Matilda to let her know what had happened, a policewoman, (11)_____, answered the phone.

The policewoman informed the detective that Matilda (12)_____, had been arrested at the airport for possession of a stolen car, (13)_____, and that Jacquita was last seen boarding a plane, holding a cup of cappuccino in one hand and an airline ticket to Rio in the other.
