

Universidad de Los Andes
Facultad de Humanidades y Educación
Escuela de Idiomas Modernos

Punctuation of Adjective Clauses

An adjective clause is a dependent clause that modifies a noun. It describes, identifies or gives further information about a noun. It is also called a relative clause. A relative clause can be:

- a) Essential (or restrictive or defining): If the relative clause is necessary to identify the noun it modifies. E.g., *The professor who teaches chemistry is an excellent lecturer.* In this case no commas are used because the relative clause is necessary to identify which professor is meant.

- b) Nonessential (or nonrestrictive or nondefining): If the relative clause simply gives additional information and it is not necessary to identify the noun it modifies. E.g., *Professor Wilson, who teaches chemistry, is an excellent lecturer.* In this case commas are used because the relative clause is not necessary to identify the noun; we already know who he is.

Exercise: Put commas when necessary.

1. Jack Rimmer saw the man who is going to sail around the world.
2. Alan Weeks is sailing with Gerry Banks who is a friend of his.
3. The boat which he built is called "Morning Star".
4. He is sailing from Portsmouth which is on the south coast of England.
5. Prof. Bratt whose husband won a literature prize last year is visiting Mérida.
6. Prof. Bratt is the teacher whose husband won a literature prize last year.
7. Mérida which is the most beautiful city of Venezuela has over 300,000 inhabitants.
8. Mérida is the most beautiful city that I have ever lived in.
9. Mary is marrying Tom Cruise who is a famous movie star.
10. John lives in New York where he was also born.
11. John lives in a city where there are many famous museums.
12. The University of the Andes will be closed on March 29 when it celebrates its anniversary.
13. The University of the Andes was founded when Venezuela was still a Spanish colony.
14. I had to eat pork which made me sick.
15. Can you show me the house where John lives?
16. This is the last exercise that you'll do today.