

5b -- Relative Clauses 1

Relative Clauses 1

Defining relative clauses with **who**, **that** and **which**

1 Study these examples:

- I spoke to the woman **who** owns the hotel.
- Did you see the letter **that** came this morning?

... who owns the hotel

and

... that came this morning

are 'defining relative clauses' (skilgreinandi tilvisunarsetningar). These clauses tell us **which** person or **thing** the speaker means (e.g. *who owns the hotel* tells us which woman; and *that came this morning* tells us which letter).

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2 We use **who** for people. Look at this:

- I spoke to the woman. **She** owns the hotel.
 - I spoke to the woman **who** owns the hotel.
- The man was very nice. **He** interviewed me.
 - The man **who** interviewed me was very nice.

We use **that** for things. Look here:

- Did you see the letter? **It** came this morning.
 - Did you see the letter **that** came this morning?
- The keys have disappeared. **They** were on this table.
 - The keys **that** were on this table have disappeared.

Note that **who** and **that** **replace** the **pronoun**.

- I spoke to the woman **who** owns the hotel.
(Not: I spoke to the woman **she** owns the hotel.)

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3 We can use ***which*** instead of ***that*** (to talk about things) in a defining relative clause.

- Did you see the letter ***which*** came this morning?
- The keys ***which*** were on this table have disappeared.

In an **informal** style, it is also possible to use ***that*** instead of ***who*** (to talk about people).

- I spoke to the woman ***that*** owns the hotel.