

5c -- Relative Clauses 2

Relative Clauses 2

Leaving out *who*, *that* and *which* in defining relative clauses

1 *Who*, *that* and *which* can be the **subject** (frumlag = á undan sögninni) or the **object** (andlag = á eftir sögninni) of a defining relative clause. Look at these:

- Marianne is the girl **who** invited us to the party.
who is the subject: **She** invited us to the party
- Marianne is the girl **who** we met last night.
who is the object: We met **her** last night

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2 We often leave out ***who***, ***that*** or ***which*** when they are the objects in defining relative clauses.

- Marianne is the girl we met last night.
(We met ***her*** last night)
- Have you seen the book I put on this table?
(I put ***it*** on this table)

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3 But we **cannot** leave out *who*, *that* or *which* when they are the **subjects** in these clauses.

- Marianne is the girl **who** invited us to the party.
(Not: ~~Marianne is the girl invited us ...~~)
She invited us to the party.
- Have you seen the book that was on this table.
(Not: ~~Have you seen the book was on this table?~~)
It was on this table.

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4 We can use **whom** instead of **who** (for people) when it is the **object** of the verb in a relative clause.

- I met a woman **whom** I know.
I know **her**.

But **whom** is quite **formal** and not very common in everyday speech. Instead, we use **who** or **that** (or we leave them out).

- I met a woman (**who**) I know.