THAT, WHICH, WHO

"That," "which," and "who" are seen at the beginning of clauses and add detail. When used this way, "that," "which," and "who" are called relative pronouns. However, each conveys different information. A strategy for knowing whether to use "that" versus "which" — generally, "which" follows a comma. Commas often indicate whether or not a clause is essential. If you would use commas to offset nonessential information, use "which."

Using "That":

- **Restrictive clauses**: restricts the identity of the subject of the sentence—it is specific and necessary information.
    - Ex. The dog **that** bit me was small.
    - Ex. The car **that** I bought is blue.
        - In these examples, "that" limits the identities of the dog and car, and the information that follows "that" is specific to the subject.
    - Ex. You cannot remove **that** prepositional phrase without changing the meaning of the sentence.
    - Ex. It wasn't just any old fight **that** made me end it; it was the fight we had regarding "the chicken or the egg."

Using "Which":

- **Nonrestrictive clauses**: Using "which" indicates that information isn't necessary. Nonrestrictive clauses, unlike restrictive clauses, do not restrict the subject but instead provide additional information. If the information between the commas were removed, the meaning of the sentence is still clear to the reader.
    - Ex. The brown journal, **which she received for her birthday**, looks older than it is.
        - In the previous example, it doesn't matter when or under what circumstances the journal was received. The clause, beginning with "which," indicates that the information is there to supplement the subject and just provide additional understanding (but not information that is necessary).

Using "Who":

- Use "who" the same way that you would use "that," but only when referring to human subjects.
    - Ex. My friend who wears too much perfume is catching a ride with me today.
- The information provided after "who" is necessary for understanding which friend the speaker is discussing.

Using "Whom" and "Whose"

- "Whom" and "whose" are forms of "who"
    - "whose": Used to indicate **possession** in a **restrictive clause**
        - Ex. The journalist **whose** story I read yesterday has won prizes for her work.
    - "whom": "Use who" when referring to the sentence **subject**. Used when referring to the **object** *receiving* the action. "Whom" is formal and used less frequently.

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