Relative Clauses

relative pronoun

John, who was in the hall, was playing the piano.

relative clause

main clause

- Relative clauses are a form of subordinate clause.
- Relative clauses add information to a sentence using relative pronouns.
- A relative pronoun (that, who, whom, whose, which) is used at the start of a relative clause. 'Where' is a relative adverb, but it is used in exactly the same way as a relative pronoun.
- A relative clause functions as an adjective, modifying nouns and pronouns.



There are two types of relative clauses: non-essential and essential.



The lamp post, where the girl was standing, was lit.

The relative clause gives the reader extra information about the lamp post. The information could be removed without changing the meaning of the sentence so it is a non-essential relative clause.

The lamp post where the girl was standing was lit.

The relative clause specifies the particular lamp post so it is essential.

