

The Relative Pronoun

1. In English, the main relative pronouns are “who”, “whom”, “which” and “that”.
2. In German, the relative pronoun is IDENTICAL to the definite article (**der, die, das**) except for the dative plural (**denen**) and the genitive (see next lesson).
3. An older form of the relative pronoun related to the English “which”, is the **der**-word **welcher**, still commonly used as an interrogative pronoun:

Welches neue Auto hast du gekauft? *Which new car did you buy?*

4. A common mistake of English speakers is to use **daß** or **das** to translate “that” or “which”. The former is NEVER correct (**daß** is a subordinating conjunction, not a pronoun), while **das** can only be used in the nominative and accusative singular neuter.

The church that... **Die Kirche, die...**

5. Remember that **wer** is an INTERROGATIVE pronoun, and can NEVER be used as a relative pronoun:

The man who... **Der Mann, der...**

The Five Rules of Relative Clauses

- 1. The relative pronoun (RP) gets its GENDER and NUMBER from its ANTECEDENT.

Das Kind, das hier wohnt,... (both neuter and singular)

- 2. The RP gets its CASE from the CLAUSE in which it appears.

Der Mann, dem ich das Geld gab,... (dative because of **gab**)

Die Frau, die hier wohnt,... (nominative because it is the subject of **wohnt**)

Mein Sohn, den wir heute besuchten,... (accusative object of **besuchten**)

- 3. Relative clauses are SUBORDINATE clauses, and have VERB-LAST word order.

Meine Bücher, die gestern dort auf dem Tisch lagen, sind weg.

- 4. Prepositions always PRECEDE the RP.

Die Leute, bei denen wir wohnen...

- 5. Unlike English, one can NEVER omit the RP in German!

The woman I love. **Die Frau, die ich liebe.**

A. Fill in the correct form of the relative pronoun:

1. Das ist der neue Wagen, _____ wir kaufen wollen.
2. Ist das das Lokal, _____ uns so gefallen hat?
3. Er ist ein Mann, _____ ich nicht helfen konnte.
4. Kennst du die Leute, _____ heute abend kommen?
5. Die Zimmer, in _____ wir wohnen, sind klein und häßlich.
6. Die Ärztin, zu _____ ich ging, war ausgezeichnet.
7. Ich kenne einen Mann, _____ nur ein Auge hat.
8. Ach, das ist die Hausaufgabe, an _____ ich mich nicht erinnern konnte.
9. Der beste Lehrer, _____ ich habe, ist, natürlich, Herr Lemon!
10. Alice, _____ immer so höflich ist, ist wirklich eine Terroristin.

B. Express in German:

1. That's the chocolate truffle that I want.
2. The thoughts that we had were all very fine.
3. The spinach we ate was quite fresh.
4. I know a woman who knew Elvis.
5. Where's the kid who caught the trout?
6. The apprentice you were waiting for got the short end of the stick.
7. The people we stayed with originally came from Austria.
8. That's an idea that I really want to emphasize.
9. Is that really the coffin [**r Sarg**] Count [**r Graf**] Dracula slept in?
10. I don't know the man you're talking about.