**Restrictive Clauses Narrow Things Down**

**Restrictive clauses** are usually introduced by the relative pronouns *that, who, whom*, or *whose*. A **restrictive clause** can have an identifying function.

The astronaut who first stepped on the moon was Neil Armstrong.

The **restrictive clause** in this sentence is *who first stepped on the moon*. If we stripped it from the sentence, we would be left with this:

The astronaut was Neil Armstrong.

There is nothing grammatically wrong with this Spartan sentence. However, it does not have the same intent as the former example, which was to identify the person who first set foot on the moon’s surface.

A **restrictive clause** can also have a limiting function.

Children who eat vegetables are likely to be healthy.

If the **restrictive clause** *who eat vegetables* were removed from this sentence, the intended limits on the noun *children* would be no more.

Children are likely to be healthy.

Obviously, our intention with the first sentence was to point out which children, from among the world’s multitudes, perform a behaviour likely to sustain their health. Thus, *who eat vegetables* is an essential element of that sentence.

**Nonrestrictive Clauses Give Bonus Info**

**Nonrestrictive clauses** provide additional but optional descriptions that can be excised from a sentence without altering its meaning or structure.

Kaylee, who just graduated from high school, is an accomplished figure skater.

While the **nonrestrictive clause** *who just graduated from high school* offers a good description of the subject of this sentence, *Kaylee*, the sentence retains its meaning without it.

Kaylee is an accomplished figure skater.

**Commas and Relative Clauses**

A broad rule you can apply to relative clauses in order to punctuate them correctly is that **restrictive clauses** are never offset by commas, whereas **nonrestrictive clauses** are. One way to remember this is that **nonrestrictive clauses** are removable, and [commas mark the removable part of the sentence](https://www.grammarly.com/blog/comma-with-nonrestrictive-clauses/). **Restrictive clauses**, on the other hand, are essential; they need to blend with their sentences seamlessly, without commas.

Wrong: Would you lend me the book, that you recommended last week?

Correct: Would you lend me the book that you recommended last week?

Wrong: Oliver Twist which was Dickens’s second novel is a classic.

Correct: Oliver Twist, which was Dickens’s second novel, is a classic.

Exercise:

<https://www.ego4u.com/en/cram-up/grammar/relative-clauses/exercises?04>