

Relative Pronouns

Relative pronouns are used to join two sentences, such as:

- J'ai trouvé un appartement. Cet appartement a trois pièces.
- *I found an apartment. This apartment has three rooms.*

When the sentences are joined, the subject of the second sentence can be replaced by a relative pronoun:

J'ai trouvé un appartement qui a trois pièces. I found an apartment which has three rooms.

There are several different relative pronouns. The choice of pronoun depends on two things:
1) whether the pronoun is definite (refers to a known antecedent) or indefinite (the antecedent is unknown or unclear.), and
2) what the pronoun's grammatical function is in the subordinate clause.

Subjects

Qui is used when the noun replaced is in the position of the grammatical subject.

Note that **qui** – unlike **que** – **does not contract** before a vowel sound.

- *Voilà l'homme qui a volé mon portefeuille! There's the man who stole my wallet!*
- *J'ai lu un roman qui m'a beaucoup amusé! I read a novel that entertained me a great deal.*

When the antecedent is unclear or absent (or when the noun appears after the relative pronoun), the indefinite relative pronoun **qui** is used.

- *Ce qui m'intéresse dans ce film, c'est la musique. What interests me in this film is the music.*
- *Je ne sais pas ce qui s'est passé. I don't know what happened.*

Direct Objects

Que is used when the noun replaced is in the position of the grammatical direct object. Note that **que** will contract to **qu'** before a vowel sound:

- *Il a commandé une boisson qu'il n'a pas bue. He ordered a beverage which he didn't drink.*
- *Elle parle du voyage que nous allons faire. She is talking about the trip [that] we're going to take.*

When the antecedent is unclear or absent (or when the noun appears after the relative pronoun), the indefinite relative pronoun **que** is used:

- *Tu peux faire ce que tu veux. You can do what you want.*
- *Ce qu'ils font me semble utile. What they are doing seems useful.*

Objects of the preposition "de"

Dont is generally used when the noun replaced is an object of the preposition **de**. It is commonly used with verbs followed by **de** (**parler de, se méfier de, avoir besoin de, être content de**, etc.), as well as to show possession (similar to whose in English):

- *Voici le livre dont je t'ai parlé. Here's the book I told you about.*
- *Le touriste dont le billet était périmé s'est plaint. The tourist whose ticket had expired made a complaint.*

When the antecedent is unclear or absent (or when the noun appears after the relative pronoun), the indefinite relative pronoun **dont** is used:

- *Voilà ce dont j'ai besoin! There's what I need!*
- *Ce dont tu rêves est impossible à réaliser. What you are dreaming of is impossible to do.*

Note that compound prepositions (**à côté de, près de**, etc.), are not followed by **dont**, but by **qui** or **lequel**. See next paragraph.

Objects of other prepositions

Generally **lequel** will be used to replace the object of prepositions other than **de** (including compound prepositions, such as **à côté de, près de**, etc.). When the pronoun refers to people, **qui** may be used. Remember that **lequel** will change to agree in number and gender (**lequel, laquelle, lesquels, lesquelles**) with the noun to which it refers, and it can contract with **à** and **de** like the definite article.

- *Voici le patron avec lequel j'ai fait cette chemise. Here's the pattern with which I made this shirt.*
- *La dame pour qui [ou: pour laquelle] je travaille est très sévère. The woman for whom I work is quite strict.*
- *Voilà l'arbre à côté duquel Newton était assis. Here's the tree next to which Newton was sitting.*

When the antecedent is unclear or absent (or when the noun appears after the relative pronoun), the indefinite relative pronoun **quoi** is used:

- *Dis-moi ce à quoi tu penses. Tell me what you're thinking about.*
- *Ils sont allés dîner, après quoi ils sont rentrés. They went out for dinner, after which they went home.*

Time and space



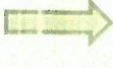
Où is used to replace nouns referring to time:

- *Je me rappelle le jour où nous avons fait connaissance. I remember the day when we met.*
- *Il est arrivé au moment où nous parlions de lui. He arrived at the moment we were speaking of him.*

Où may also be used instead of constructions with **lequel** when the preposition indicates space. However, **où** is less precise than **lequel** constructions:

- *Voici la maison où [dans laquelle] mes parents sont nés. Here's the house where my parents were born.*

Prépositions

devant	en face de	grâce à
derrière	près de	jusqu'à
sur	à côté de	s'habituer à
avec	etc...	etc...
etc...		
		
lequel	duquel	auquel
laquelle	de laquelle	à laquelle
lesquels	desquels	auxquels
lesquelles	desquelles	auxquelles