

Relative Clauses

Beispiele:

Wer ist der Gast, **der an dem Tisch sitzt**?

Who's the guest (who is) sitting at the table?

Das ist ihr Kind, **das ohne Schuhe herumläuft**.

That is her child who is running around without her shoes.

Meinst du die Frau, **die ihre Brille gerade geputzt hat**?

Do you mean the women who just cleaned her glasses?

A relative clause provides additional information about a previously mentioned noun. The clause is introduced by a relative pronoun (**der, das** or **die**) that refers back to the noun, which is the antecedent (**Gast, Kind, or Frau**). In English the relative pronoun may or may not be stated. In German the relative pronoun is always stated.

Ist das der Fernseher, den du kaufen **willst**?

*Is that the TV (that) you **want** to buy?*

Since a relative clause is a dependent clause, the finite verb is in the final position. In writing, a comma separates the relative clause from the main clause. (in other words it is hateful – kicks the verb to the curb)

Forms of the relative pronoun

	masculine	feminine	neuter	plural
nominative	der	die	das	die
accusative	den	die	das	die
dative	dem	der	dem	denen
genitive	dessen	deren	dessen	deren

The forms of the relative pronouns are the same as the definite article, except for the dative plural and all genitive forms.

Ist das deine Freundin, die diese Karte geschrieben hat?

Is that your friend who wrote this card?

Die Karte, die du meinst, ist nicht von meiner Freundin.

The card (that) you mean is not from my friend.

In German relative pronouns can refer to either persons (ie Freundin) or things (ie Karte)

masculine Wer ist **der Mann, der** an dem Tisch sitzt?
 feminine Wer ist **die Frau, die** an dem Tisch sitzt?
 neuter Wer ist **das Kind, das** an dem Tisch sitzt?
 plural Wer sind **die Leute, die** an dem Tisch sitzen?

The gender (masculine, neuter, feminine) of a relative pronoun is determined by the gender of the antecedent. In the examples above, **der** is masculine because it refers to **der Mann** and **die** is feminine because it refers to **die Frau**. Whether a pronoun is singular or plural also depends on the noun to which it refers. The pronoun **die** that refers to the **die Leute** is plural and therefore requires the plural verb *sitzen*.

nominative	Ist das der Mann, der nebenan wohnt?	<i>Is that the man who lives next door?</i>
accusative	Ist das der Mann, den wir gestern gesehen haben?	<i>Is that the man whom we saw yesterday?</i>
dative	Ist das der Mann, dem Sie das Geld gegeben haben?	<i>Is that the man to whom you gave the money?</i>
genitive	Ist das der Mann, dessen Frau Schweizerin ist?	<i>Is that the man whose wife is Swiss?</i>

The case of the relative pronoun depends on its function in the relative clause. In the examples above, **der** is nominative because it is the subject of its clause; **den** is accusative because it is the direct object of the verb **gesehen haben** in that clause; **dem** is dative because it is an indirect object in the clause; and *dessen* is genitive because it shows a close relationship in the clause.

Ist das die Frau, für die Sie arbeiten?	Is that the women for whom you work?
Ist das die Firma, bei der Sie arbeiten?	Is that the firm (that) you work for?

A preposition followed by a relative pronoun may introduce a relative clause. The case of the relative pronoun then depends on what clause the preposition takes. In **für die, die** is the accusative because of **für**; in **bei der, der** is the dative because of **bei**.

In German, whenever a relative pronoun is the object of a preposition, the preposition precedes the pronoun. In colloquial English the preposition is often in the last position that you work for.

Ist das alles, was du mir sagen wolltest?

Use *was* as the relative pronoun if the noun in the main clause is an indefinite pronoun such as *alles*, *etwas*, *nichts*, *viel* or *wenig*.

In dem Gebäude, wo ich arbeite, gibt es ein gutes Restaurant.

You may use *wo* instead of a prepositional phrase to indicate location in a relative clause.