

Misconceptions of Defining and Non-defining Relative Clauses.

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A subject is non-defining when the additional information provided about it is not essential to identifying what the subject refers to. This happens in sentences with non-defining relative clauses, which add extra details but do not change the core meaning of the sentence.

What Makes a Subject Non-defining?

It is the relative clause (**additional information**) that makes it non-defining, not the subject itself. A non-defining relative clause provides extra, non-essential information and is set off by **commas**.

Elucidation

Non-defining Subject

My brother, who works in America, is visiting us next week.

Subject my brother

Relative clause who works in America.

Knowledge

The relative clause is non-defining because it adds extra information, even without it, we still understand who works.

Defining Subject: Example (for contrast)

The man who lives next door is a doctor.

Subject: the man who lives next door

Relative clause: who lives next door.

Note

This is defining because it helps us (to) identify which man we are talking about. Without it, the meaning is unclear.

Key Features of Non-Defining Relative Clauses

Use commas around them.

Can be removed without changing the basic meaning.

They (commas) are often used with proper nouns or known subjects eg 'My friend ', 'Uganda' , 'The President' of (a certain country).

A MUST Read

Whenever you ask the question 'who' / 'which'? and realize that the subject cannot give a clear answer to that question, you don't apply the

commas as it is in this case. 'The man' still brings the question 'Which man?' But when we have subjects like: My mother, Daniel, Mr. Obote, This book, That dog, Her niece, Our aunt, Your father, Mr. Olowo, Mr. Phenekas, Mr. Kingale , Their house, Joshua's phone, Joss's book, The Ugandan boxer, The stolen car, King Solomon, The pen on the table, The broken glasses, Dr. Kibombo, Rev. Fred, JohnPatrick, Uncle Bukoma, Fr. Samuel, Mrs. Babirye, Rev. Oboth's daughter Akello, etc. which can lucidly answer 'Who?'/ 'Which?' we apply the two commas.

**I pray that this peice of information
helps you as well as your learners.**

**May God bless and give you wisdom
as you elucidate this information to
your learners.**

Psalm 118:17

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