



Source: Dr. M. Dickerson (date unknown) Clauses handout, 13-09-18,
<http://www.bpi.edu/ourpages/auto/2011/9/16/58978302/Clauses.pdf>.

Adjective clauses: How to make them and
how to use them
Essential adjective clauses
Non-essential adjective clauses

Just as adjectives such as beautiful or lonely describe nouns and pronouns, so do adjective clauses. Adjective clauses are sentences, that take the place of an adjective in the sentence, and give a description. Just like any other clause, an adjective clause had a subject and a predicate (a verb). Adjective clauses are always dependent. There are several words which introduce an adjective clause. These words are: who, whom, which, that, when, where or why (Dr. M. Dickerson: 5).

There are two types of adjective clauses. Essential and non-essential (Dr. M. Dickerson: 8).

Non-essential adjective clause

In a nonessential adjective clause the information that the adjective clause gives is extra, but you can read and understand the sentence without the adjective clause. If this is the case, you put the adjective clause between commas (Dr. M. Dickerson: 8).

Example: The train, which was late again, had a different colour than usual. Today it was blue and green.

In the above given sentence, the adjective clause is 'which was late again'. The subject in the clause is the word 'which' and the predicate, the verb, is the word 'was'. The sentence is dependent as it doesn't make sense on its own.

Essential adjective clause

In an essential adjective clause the information given in the adjective clause is needed to understand the main clause. If this is the case we don't put the adjective clause between commas (Dr. M. Dickerson: 8).

Example: The house which was stood at the end of the street was the only one that was empty.

In this sentence the information that we are talking about the house at the end of the street is essential. Our adjective clause in the sentence above is 'which was stood at the end of the street'. Here our subject is 'which' and our predicate is 'was stood'.

See these ASK documents for additional information:

Noun clauses:

Adverb clauses:

Clause structures: