**Identifying the Adjective Clause**

Here is a list of sentences, all written by professional writers, but with some parts deleted.

1. I used to have a cat, an old fighting tom.
2. She lived in a small farm house with her invalid mother and a thin, sallow unflagging aunt.
3. That spirit of discord was gone.
4. Louise tried to make talk, but the country boy was embarrassed and would say nothing.

Now compare those sentences with the originals. Notice that the additions account for the distinctiveness of the original sentences.

1. I used to have a cat, an old fighting tom, **who would jump through the open window by my bed in the middle of the night and land on my chest**.

*Annie Dillard, Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*

1. She lived in a small frame house with her invalid mother and a thin, sallow, unflagging aunt, **where each morning between ten and eleven she would appear on the porch in a lace-trimmed boudoir cap to sit swinging in the porch swing until noon**.

*William Faulkner, “Dry September”*

1. That spirit of discord, **which had jumbled my thoughts like powerful fingers sifting through sand or grains or rice**, was gone.

*Stephen King, “Night Journey”*

1. Louise, **whose mind was filled with thoughts of him**, tried to make talk, but the country boy was embarrassed and would say nothing.

*Sherwood Anderson, Winesburg, Ohio*

The **boldface** phrases are the adjective clauses, another of the sentence parts that differentiate professional writing from student writing. They are frequently used by professional writers but barely by students. Adjective clauses are an effective way to combine related ideas in one sentence.

**Characteristics of the Adjective Clause**

Adjective clauses are sentence parts that describe whatever is mentioned to the left of them in the same sentence. Most begin with the words: *who, which, whose,* or *where.* They can occur as subject-verb splits, or sentence closers. Examples are **boldfaced**.

*Subject-Verb Split*

1. Keeton, ***who* overtopped Norris by five inches and outweighed him by a hundred pounds**, gave the deputy a harsh little shake and then did let go.

*Stephen King, Needful Things*

1. Even his eyes, ***which* had been young**, looked old.

*John Steinbeck, The Red Pony*

1. His face, ***whose* shades we had often labeled**, now achieved a new one.

*John Knowles, A Separate Peace*

*Sentence Closers*

1. They dropped his belongings at the freshman dorm, ***where* the only sign of his roommate was a khaki duffel bag and a canvas butterfly chair printed to resemble a gigantic hand**.

*Anne Tyler, Saint Maybe*

1. I loved school with a desperate passion, ***which* became more intense when I began to realize what a monumental struggle it was for my parents and brothers and sisters to keep me there**.

*Eugenia Collier, “Sweet Potato Pie”*

1. I began to wonder what God thought about Westley, ***who* certainly hadn’t seen Jesus either**, but ***who* was now sitting proudly on the platform swinging his knickerbockered legs and grinning down at me**. (two closers)

*Langston Hughes, The Big Sea*

**PRACTICE I Name:**

*UNSCRAMBLING*

Each scrambled sentence has one or more adjective clause. Identify them. Then unscramble the sentence parts and write out the sentence, punctuating it correctly. Identify (mark or highlight) the adjective clause(s). Be aware that there are often multiple correct answers. Your answers must be acceptable and not awkward.

1 a. a pretty good light-heavy weight

b. there was one fighter in those days

c. named Junior Ellis

d. before a bout

e. who used to sing along with country and western records

*Robert Lipsyte, The Contender*

2 a. whose eyes were quicker than most

b. Little Jon

c. on the stars

d. should have seen the hole

e. but all his attention was

*Alexander Key, The Forgotten Door*

3 a. peering from a distance at Jem

b. to a corner

c. Boo had drifted

d. of the room

e. where he stood with his chin up

*Harper Lee, To Kill a Mockingbird*

4 a. as the probable liberal candidate for Mid-Devon

b. the recent sudden death of Sir Charles Baskerville

c. has cast a gloom over the county

d. at the next election

e. whose name has been mentioned

*Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, The Hound of the Baskervilles*

5 a. after the night’s tides

b. bare-legged to the beach

c. which lies smooth, flat, and glistening

d. we run

e. with fresh wet shells

*Anne Morrow Lindbergh, Gift from the Sea*

6 a. who defied authority for the sake of defiance

b. whose word was law among boys

c. this leader

d. and looked even younger

e. was no more than twelve or thirteen years old

*Henry Gregor Felsen, “Horatio”*

7 a. in pursuit of him

b. Phillippe had dashed

c. thinking that his brother had run away with Christine

d. where he knew that everything was prepared for the elopement

e. along the Brussels Road

*Gaston Leroux, The Phantom of the Opera*

8 a. that people of honest feeling and sensibility

b. born with low intelligence

c. how strange it is

d. born without arms or legs or eyes

e. who would not take advantage of a man

f. think nothing of abusing a man

*Daniel Keyes, “Flowers for Algernon”*

**PRACTICE II**

*IMITATING*

Unscramble the sentences to imitate the model. Make sure your **entire** sentence imitates the model (ie: subject, predicate, phrases, clauses are in the same place as the model).

*MODEL*:

I left the cell, turned the locks, then faced Delacroix, ***who* was standing across the way with his hands wrapped around the bars of his cell**, looking at me anxiously.

*Stephen King, “Coffey’s Hands”*

1 a. waiting for her patiently

b. then noticed Max

c. who was staring at her from a vantage point down the block near the lamppost

d. she closed the door, went outside

2 a. who were rehearsing on the unlit stage with only a piano for accompaniment

b. the producer entered the theatre, took a seat

c. learning the difficult choreography

d. then watched the dancers

**PRACTICE III Name:**

*COMBINING*

Study the model, and then combine the sentences that follow into one sentence that imitates the model. Begin by changing the first sentence to resemble the first sentence part of the model, the second sentence to resemble the second sentence part of the model, etc.

**EXAMPLE**

*MODEL*:

The lowest step, ***where* the stream collected before it tumbled down a hundred feet and disappeared into the rubbly desert**, was a little platform of stone and sand.

*John Steinbeck, The Pearl*

a. This is about the parking lot.

b. It is where the students gathered.

c. They gathered there after the game ended in overtime.

d. And the game then brought a close victory.

e. The victory was for the home team.

f. The parking lot was a mass of shouts and cheers.

*COMBINATION:*

The parking lot, ***where* the students gathered after the game ended in overtime and then brought a close victory for the home team**, was a mass of shouts and cheers.

1.

*MODEL*:

Jumping to his feet and breaking off the tale, Doctor Parcival began to walk up and down in the office of the *Winesburg Eagle*, ***where* George Willard sat listening**.

*Sherwood Anderson, Winesburg, Ohio*

a. It happened as she was walking in her boots and sinking into mud.

b. The landscaper started to inspect the front of the garden.

c. In addition, she started to inspect the back of the garden.

d. In both places the downpour had washed away things.

e. What it washed away was many of the new plants.

2.

*MODEL*:

After standing still for a moment, as if to observe the sick woman from a little distance, he crossed to the bed, ***which* was illuminated by a single bedside lamp**.

*Stephen King, “Night Journey”*

a. It happened while scrutinizing lovingly from the hallway.

b. The scrutinizing was as if to rearrange all the china and flowers for the bridal party.

c. What happened was she walked toward the dining table.

d. It was the table which was covered by something.

e. It was covered by a pure white lace tablecloth.

3.

*MODEL*:

Dorothy lived in the midst of the great Kansas prairies, with Uncle Henry, ***who* was a farmer**, and Aunt Em, ***who* was the farmer’s wife**.

*L. F. Baum, The Wizard of Oz*

a. Marshall perched in his apartment loft.

b. The loft was in the bohemian district.

c. Marshall was with Tramp, who was a mutt.

d. In addition, Marshall was with Lady, who was a blue-ribbon pedigree.

4.

*MODEL*:

They had planned to spend the first night at Bardstown, ***which* in good weather was only a few hours away**, and ***where* there was an attractive old inn**.

*Peter Taylor, “Reservations: A Love Story”*

a. They had stopped to relax that afternoon.

b. The place they stopped was at Beltway Springs.

c. Beltway Springs was the place which on most days was a very popular tourist site.

d. In addition, Beltway Springs was the place where there was a famous spring-water well.

**PRACTICE IV**

*EXPANDING*

At the slash mark, add an **adjective clause**. In PART 1, the first few words are provided and the number of words you need to add is given. You cannot add another adjective clause; you must complete the one started for you. You are not allowed to use the actual words which were omitted for your answer.

**PART 1**

1. Before Shelia left for America to be married two years before, she gave Ma a large and very beautiful volume of the complete works of Shakespeare, ***which* is** / [4].

*Christy Brown, My Left Foot*

**which is** / [4]

1. His black hair, ***which* had been** / [6], was dry now and blowing.

*J. D. Salinger, “The Laughing Man”*

**which had been** / [6]

1. Percy had returned to the storage room, ***where* he probably** / [8].

*Stephen King, “Night Journey”*

**where he probably** / [8]

1. The women, ***who* were never** / [13], must take the place of the men and face the dangers that abound beyond the village.

*Scott O’Dell, Island of the Blue Dolphins*

**who were never** / [13]

**PART 2**

In PART 2, add an **adjective clause** for each slash mark. You are not allowed to use the actual words which were omitted for your answer.

1. Mr. Sherlock Holmes, /, was seated at the breakfast table.

*Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, The Hound of the Baskervilles*

1. The terror, /, began, so far as I know or can tell, with a boat made from a sheet of newspaper floating down a gutter swollen with rain.

*Stephen King, It*

1. The taxi driver, /, carefully placed Miss Hearne in the back seat of his car and started the engine.

*Brian Moore, The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne*

1. One evening in the late fall, George ran out of his house to the library, /.

*Bernard Malamud, “A Summer’s Reading”*