

(8) RN – (Subordinate) Reference and Noun Clause Forms

The (Subordinate) **Reference and Noun Clause (RN) forms** comprise the eighth Sentence Form group. They consist of Subordinate Reference Clauses and Subordinate Noun Clauses that start with the conjunctions shown in the following chart.

8 RN	Subordinate Reference and Noun Clause Forms		
<i>Subordinate Reference and Noun Clause Conjunctions</i>			
8.1 – 8.3	who	where	when
8.4 – 8.6	why	what(ever)	how
8.7 – 8.9	that	which	whose
8.10		whom	
<i>Subordinate Reference and Noun Clause Forms – odd one</i>			
8.11	Missing [that]		

The order of these conjunctions in the chart is important, since they represent the return of the fundamental questions that we repeatedly ask ourselves: *Who* (am I?), *Where* (am I, are we?), *When* (did it happen? do we begin?). These represent the self in space and time. The next questions are: *Why? What? How?* These represent the continually unanswered question: *Why am I alive? What is my purpose? What is existence¹? How do I live?*

The traditional grammar has erred in restricting the designation **subordinate** only to what was previously called Subordinate Clauses (in the 2HA, they are called Subordinate Adverbial Clauses). *They should have also applied the designation to Reference and Noun Clauses* since both Reference and Noun Clauses are dependent, can't stand by themselves, and are subservient to the main clause of the sentence in which they occur.

So we therefore propose that we call all three types of clauses subordinate clauses by calling them: Subordinate Adverbial Clauses, Subordinate Reference Clauses, and Subordinate Noun Clauses.

We change the traditional term **Relative Clause** to the new designation of *Reference Clause* because the word *relative* in this designation is notoriously confusing and vague. When the conjunction was called *relative*, it was called so because it was **pertinent** to the word preceding it, which really means **related to** it, and more properly still can be expressed by saying it is **referring**

¹ These question is summarized in the ultimate philosophical question: *Why is there something, rather than nothing?*

or **referencing** back to the word before it. We now call this not a Relative Clause, but a **Reference Clause**.

A **Subordinate Reference Clause**, then, is a clause of the form described in the following table:

Types of (Subordinate) Reference Clauses
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>[RN conjunction acting as subject] + verb + ...</i></p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>(1) Rosita, who is my girlfriend, was born in Guatemala.</p> <p>(2) That guy who is sitting over there is our prime suspect.</p> <p>(3) Every person who signed up must be there at six o'clock.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>[RN conjunction] + subject + verb ...</i></p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>(1) Any place where banyan trees grow is a favorite of mine.</p> <p>(2) At a time when all companies are cutting back and downsizing, Integra Trust continues to expand its financial services into new countries.</p>

The Reference Clause refers back to the preceding noun or pronoun. They are associated with those Nouns or pronouns.

A **Subordinate Noun Clause** is a clause of the form described in the following chart:

Types of (Subordinate) Noun Clauses	
[RN conjunction] + verb + ...	
Examples: (1) They still want to know <u>who committed the murder of their daughter.</u> (2) Considering <u>what has happened in the last few days,</u> I think we should still maintain our prayer vigil.	
[RN conjunction] + subject/object + verb ...	
Examples: (1) <u>What you do with your life</u> is your gift to the Creator. (2) Think carefully about <u>how you will spend the scholarship money.</u> (3) Do you know <u>what I mean?</u> (4) Do you know <u>whose book it is?</u>	
[RN conjunction] + infinitive +...	
Examples: (1) I don't know <u>where to go.</u> (2) Do you know <u>how to make perogies?</u>	

Acting as a Noun, the Subordinate Noun Clause can do the function of Subject or Object in the sentence.

We have separated Relative and Noun Clauses but feel that **the grammatical distinction is not important for writing purposes at this stage.** It is a comparative waste of student's time and makes little difference in practical composition to ask them to distinguish between traditional "relative" or what we call "reference" clauses and noun clauses. All that matters is that students use subordinate clauses that begin with the ten main designated signifying markers listed in the first chart above.

The first three conjunctions (*who, where, when*) address and represent the identity of the self and its location in space and time. The next questions are *why, what, how*. The second set of three conjunctions addresses and represents the continual important questions, such as *Why am I here? What is my goal? How do I live?* and all the innumerable combinations and permutations of those questions.

The last set of conjunctions (*that, which, whose, whom*) is used less to ask questions (as they can be used that way), but more to extend and amplify additional information to earlier main clauses and statements in the sentence.

It is important to remember, however, that the previous first six conjunctions are not usually (though they can be) actually framed as questions when they appear as RN Clauses. The questions rather are usually framed as statements or assertions. The following examples show proper types of RN Clauses:

*Lately, I do not know **who** I am.*
*I can't remember **where** I left my wallet.*
*I don't know **when** the concert will begin.*
*I can't understand **why** she left me.*
*I can't comprehend **what** his real goal is.*
*I don't know **how** to make a web page.*

When the students are assigned these forms, they must be instructed to write sentences that use these conjunctions as assertions or statements concluded by a period as in the examples above. **They should not give examples that are interrogative in nature, such as:**

Who is she? Where is the basketball? When is the party?

Reference/Noun Clause Form 8.1:

Reference Clause or Noun Clause - *who*

Footnote Code: RN-*who*, *whoever*

Examples:

(Reference clause)

- (1) She **who studies hard** will get some respect in the working world.
- (2) Bill Gates, **who is the owner of Microsoft**, wants to enter the video game industry.
- (3) Tom, **who is a co-worker of mine**, will be teaching the calligraphy class.

(Noun clause)

- (4) I do not know **who my soul mate is**.
- (5) She wanted to know **who stole her money**.
- (6) We still don't know **who sent the flowers**.
- (7) **Whoever** did the gag meant no harm.

Reference/Noun Clause Form 8.2:

Reference Clause or Noun Clause - *where*

Footnote Code: RN-*where*

Examples:

(Reference clause)

- (1) Luverne is the city **where** I was born.

- (2) The house where he died is for sale.
- (3) South Korea was the country where the 1988 Summer Olympics were held.
- (4) I plan to vacation in Bali, where the weather is always warm.
- (5) I will go to Christchurch, where my parents live.
- (6) I want to live in a world where I belong. [English pop group *Travis* in *Turn*]

(Noun clause)

- (6) Australia is where you can find the kookaboora bird.
- (7) I know exactly where I want to live – Santiago.
- (8) On the rack is where you should place your hat.
- (9) We will go where we are wanted.

Reference/Noun Clause Form 8.3:Reference Clause or Noun Clause - *when***Footnote Code:** RN–*when*

Note: The signifying marker *when* may cause some confusion, since *it is also an adverbial conjunction of time, used in the subordinate adverbial clauses*. When dealing with sentences that have clauses starting with *when*, it is not of great importance in how we label or categorize such tricky sentences. Students do their best and put them where they think the sentence best fits. But, for certain, their repeated exposure to many sentences having subordinate clauses starting with *when* will increase their ability to recognize and to compose such sentences with ease, and that is much better than quibbling tirelessly over a category label.

Examples:**(Reference clause)**

- (1) Spring is the season when we all rejoice with nature.
- (2) It is a time when all people like to walk outdoors.
- (3) This is a time when you can speak your mind freely.

(Noun clause)

- (1) When I sleep is when I am happiest.
- (2) How will I know when you arrive?
- (3) I don't know when I will be going.
- (4) We need to decide when we'll meet.

Reference/Noun Clause Form 8.4:Reference Clause or Noun Clause – *why***Footnote Code:** RN–*why***Examples:****(Noun clause)**

- (1) I don't know why I didn't do my homework.
- (2) Hinduism's versatility is why I find it interesting.
- (3) I don't know why I can't stop thinking about her.
- (4) Her sparkling eyes are why I find her so attractive.
- (5) I wonder why he left in a hurry.

(6) He wants to know why you are late.

Reference/Noun Clause Form 8.5:

Reference Clause or Noun Clause - *what, whatever*

Footnote Code: RN–*what, whatever*

Examples:

(Reference clause)

- (1) “An immense cushion of cloud, **what** French pilots call ‘a fat potato’, barred the horizon.” [Readers Digest July 2000]
- (2)

(Noun clause)

- (1) Did you hear **what** I said?
 - (2) She never knows **what** he’s thinking.
 - (3) **What** I like most is the small town atmosphere.
 - (4) I will do **whatever** it takes to complete this project.
 - (5) I don’t know **what** I was thinking when I joined the military.
 - (6) He accomplished **what** every human dreams of doing – walking on the moon.
 - (7) No one knew **what** the policy stated.
 - (8) “For business, the most fundamental value shift will be away from an obsession with labour efficiency to **what** Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins and L. Hunter Lovins call resource productivity, in their recent book *Natural Capitalism*.” (Robert Bateman in *Thinking Like A Mountain*)
 - (9) “What we saw on the screen was not black women talking about love or the meaning of partnership and marriage in their lives.” (bell hooks in Mock Feminism in *The Contemporary Reader* ed Goshgarian 257)
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Reference/Noun Clause Form 8.6:

Noun Clause - *how*

Footnote Code: RN–*how*

Examples:

(Noun clause)

- (1) Do you know **how** to make kimchi?
 - (2) Tracy was contemplating **how** to get rich.
 - (3) **How** they survived two weeks adrift at sea is a real miracle.
 - (4) She doesn’t know **how** she got there.
 - (5) Show me **how** to cook adobo.
 - (6) **How** he got the job done was a miracle in itself.
 - (7) She wondered **how** she would ever get all the work done in time.
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Reference/Noun Clause Form 8.7:Reference Clause or Noun Clause – *that*Footnote Code: RN–*that*

Examples:

(Reference clause)

- (1) The houses that the three pigs built would not pass modern construction standards.
- (2) The report that you sent me last week was impressive.
- (3) The volume *One Minute Bedtime Stories* consists of traditional stories that can be read by a busy parent in only one minute.
- (4) “The idea that one could own thoughts and words and that others would have to pay to hear them marked a seminal point in the history of human relations.” (Jeremy Rifkin in *The Biotech Century*)
- (5) “An identity is a trajectory in time that incorporates both past and future into the meaning of the present.” (Etienne Wenger in *Communities of Practice*)

(Noun clause)

- (7) I can’t assume that you understand all of this.
- (8) It was obvious that they had a special relationship.
- (9) I understand that you are from Malagasy.
- (10) I realize that you’ll be busy next week.
- (11) “And now chaos theory proves that unpredictability is built into our daily lives.” (Michael Crichton in *Jurassic Park* p.313)
- (12) “He remembered that there were outlying buildings for each of the different divisions.” (Michael Crichton in *Jurassic Park* p.236)
- (13) The startling news is that IQ accounts for only between 4% and 25% of a person’s job success.

Reference/Noun Clause Form 8.8:Reference Clause or Noun Clause – *which*Footnote Code: RN–*which*

Note: Usually, *which* refers back to the noun directly or closely in front of it. In such cases, it is interchangeable with *that*.

On occasion, *which* can refer back to an entire clause. For example,

There are too many mosquitoes out here, which is why I want to go inside.

Which does not in this case refer back to the antecedent noun *mosquitoes*, but refers back to the whole previous clause *There are too many mosquitoes out here*. We call this use of *which* an instance of **retro-clause referral**.

Examples:

(Reference clause)

- (1) The argument which you put forth is a good one.
- (2) The hat which I bought is very warm.
- (3) That which you don’t know is sometimes better than that which you do know.
- (4) I fell down the stairs which caused me to break my leg.

- (5) They argued continuously which later resulted in a fight.
- (6) The store which is on the corner gives the best deals on books.
- (10) "Life is an onion which one peels crying." [French proverb]
- (11) That which is done is not always that which is intended.

(Reference clause (retro-clause referral))

The antecedent clause that is being referenced is underlined.

- (12) "Although the obstetrician surely thought us a little odd, Daryl came with me to every one of my prenatal checkups, **which** meant that when I first got to hear the baby's heartbeat through an amplified stethoscope at nine weeks, so did he." (Sandra Lipsitz in *An Unconventional Family* p.92)
- (13) She comes from a poor background yet she is an A+ student and a volunteer at the cancer ward, **which** is exactly why she deserves the award.
- (14) "Dr. Oldmeyer didn't look like anything Abbey had expected, **which** was a tall, stylish, coiffed, and manicured professional." (Fern Michaels in *The Guest List* 267)
- (15) "In the book one of the women, Gloria, owns a beauty parlor; she is always, always working, **which** is what happens when you run a small business." (bell hooks in Mock Feminism in *The Contemporary Reader* ed by Goshgarian 257)

(Noun clause)

- (16) You'll have to decide which is best.
- (17) It's not important which one you choose.

Reference/Noun Clause Form 8.9:

Reference Clause or Noun Clause – *whose*

Footnote Code: RN–*whose*

Examples:

(Reference clause)

- (1) Bill Clinton will always be remembered as the president whose marital infidelity almost caused his impeachment.
- (2) I met my neighbor whose dog had just died.
- (3) I rented a car whose heater was broken.
- (4) The man, whose lawyers were very good, was acquitted.
- (5) Teddy, whose house is made from home-made bricks and a keet roof, recently bought a Rajdoot motorcycle.

(Noun clause)

- (1) I don't know whose boy that is.
- (2) They couldn't figure out whose DNA it was.
- (3) There was nothing left at the scene of the attack that could further lead investigators to determine whose prayer shawl it was.

Reference/Noun Clause Form 8.10:Reference Clause or Noun Clause - *whom***Footnote Code:** RN-*whom***Examples:****(Reference clause)**

- (1) The lady whom you met yesterday is related to Ann Landers.
- (2) The officer whom I talked with last week is not here today.

(Noun clause)

- (1) I don't know whom you're referring to.

Reference Noun/Clause Form 8.11:

Reference Clause or Noun Clause – Missing Conjunction

Footnote Code: RN-MC**Note:** Very often, the conjunction *that* or *which* is purposefully omitted entirely from the beginning of the Reference or Noun clause.**Examples:****(Reference clause)**

- (1) Some of the people **[that]** you meet in life make it all worthwhile.
- (2) The next picture **[which]** I want to show fully demonstrates the truth of what I am trying to tell you.
- (3) The comic books **[that]** I bought are funny.
- (4) The suitcase **[that]** Dad gave me is old but useful.
- (5) The CD **[that]** I bought is exuberant.
- (6) It is the second time **[that]** the auction of the 63-storey Guangdong International Building has failed.
- (7) 'It destroys all evidence **[that]** it was ever there.' (Michael Crichton in *Jurassic Park* p.239)
- (8) "It is as mundane as the rainstorm **[that]** we cannot predict." (Michael Crichton in *Jurassic Park* p.313)
- (9) "The red baby is a ball of blood **[that]** Allah wetted and into which he blew." (Annie Dillard in *For the Time Being*)

(Noun clause)

- (10) I think **[that]** she'll be happy if you get her some flowers today.
- (11) I *know* **[that]** you did your best.
- (12) The computer **[that]** I bought is really great.
- (13) "I ain't sayin' **[that]** you treated me unkind." (Bob Dylan in *Don't Think Twice, It's All Right*) ♪
- (14) I think **[that]** it's time to go.
- (15) I think **[that]** we need more practice.
- (16) We know **[that]** you tried your best.