COMPLEX SENTENCES WITH RELATIVE PRONOUNS
Complex Sentences

Definition:
Complex sentences are comprised of one independent clause and one or more dependent clause.

Independent clauses:
☐ can stand alone as a complete sentence
☐ contain a subject and a verb and
☐ express a complete thought.

Dependent clauses:
☐ contain a subject and a verb
☐ cannot stand alone as a complete sentence
☐ do not express a complete thought
Types of complex sentences

There are two types of complex sentences.

- **Subordinating conjunctions**
  - Example: *When the fish ate the bait, Martina reeled it in.*

- **Relative pronouns**
  - Example: *Email, which has been popular for many years, is losing its status to text and instant messaging.*
  - *Who, which, that* are most common relative pronouns
Examples with relative pronouns:

- All cars that have bad brakes should be kept off the streets.

- Francine, who is a police officer, recommends regular maintenance on brakes.

- British Columbia, which is to the north of Washington, is very beautiful.
Punctuating Complex Sentences with relative pronouns

- **That:** No commas are necessary (used with restrictive clauses)
  - Example: The freshman did the homework *that* was assigned.

- **Who, which:** Commas *may* be necessary
  - Commas are necessary when the information in the clause is non-restrictive — when the information is extra and not necessary to the meaning of the sentence. (specific noun)
    - Example: Angie, *who* is a stylist, is very young.
  - Commas are not necessary when the information in the clause is restrictive — when the information is necessary to the meaning of the sentence.
    - Example: Men *who* stay home to take care of *children* are more common today.
More details and examples:

- If the relative pronoun refers to a general noun, do NOT use commas.
  - People *who study a lot* receive good grades.
  - Women *who are vegetarian* often eat too much soy.

- If the relative pronoun refers to a specific (proper) noun, use commas.
  - Martina, *who studies a lot*, receives good grades
  - I’m going to see Rita, *who is a heart surgeon.*
More Examples:

- Rosa Montero, whom I admire, has written more than 10 novels.
- Authors who write every day are very successful.
- I love to read books by Douglas Coupland, who is one of my favorite authors.
- The novels that I read are often suspenseful.
- Beautiful and Dark, which is a short novel, received a lot of good reviews.