

## Grammar Lesson 18—RELATIVE PRONOUNS

The most frequent relative pronouns are:

**qui**, *who, which, that*: subject of a verb; used for both persons and things

Donnez-moi le pain **qui** est sur la table.  
 Connaissez-vous la femme **qui** chante?

Give me the bread that is on the table.  
 Do you know the woman who is singing?

**que (qu')**, *whom, which, that*: direct object of a verb; used for both persons and things

Voilà l'élève **que** j'ai grondé.  
 L'histoire **qu'**il a lue est intéressante.

There is the pupil (that) I scolded.  
 The story (which) he read is interesting.

**qui**, *whom*: object of a preposition; used only for persons

C'est le monsieur pour **qui** je travaille.  
 L'auteur à **qui** vous parliez est célèbre.

He is the gentleman for whom I work.  
 The author to whom you were talking is famous.

**lequel (mas. sing.)**  
**laquelle (fem. sing.)**  
**lesquels (mas. pl.)**  
**lesquelles (fem. pl.)**

*which*: object of a preposition; used for things

Où est le crayon avec **lequel** j'écrivais?  
 Voici la maison dans **laquelle** il est né.

Where is the pen with which I was writing?  
 This is the house in which he was born.

**dont**, *of whom, of which, whose*: used for both persons and things

Les garçons **dont** elle parle sont ses fils.  
 Voici l'argent **dont** il a besoin.  
 C'est la femme **dont** le mari est blessé.

The boys of whom she is talking are her sons.  
 Here is the money he needs (of which he has need).  
 That is the woman whose husband is wounded.

**ce qui**, *what (= that which)*: subject of a verb

Savez-vous **ce qui** est tombé?  
 Prenez **ce qui** est dans la boîte.

Do you know what fell?  
 Take what is in the box.

**ce que (ce qu')**, *what (= that which)*: direct object of a verb

Je ne sais pas **ce que** vous voulez.  
 Écoutez **ce qu'**elles disent.

I don't know what you want.  
 Listen to what they say.

### Note

1. **Que** becomes **qu'** before a word beginning with a vowel; the *i* of **qui** is never dropped.
2. Since **que** is a direct object pronoun and precedes the verb, the past participle of a compound verb agrees with **que**. (See Verb Lesson 14.)

la lettre **que** j'ai écrite  
 les cadeaux **qu'**il a achetés

the letter that I wrote  
 the presents that he bought

3. **Lequel** and its forms agree in gender and number with the nouns to which they refer.
4. The relative pronoun must always be expressed in French although it is sometimes omitted in English.

Voici la plume **que** vous avez perdue.

Here is the pen (that) you lost.

5. The word **où** (= *in which*) is used as a relative pronoun to replace **dans** + a form of **lequel**.

C'est la boîte **où** elle met ses bijoux.  
(= dans laquelle)

That's the box in which she puts her jewels.

#### SUMMARY OF RELATIVE PRONOUNS

PRONOUN	MEANING	USE
<b>qui</b>	who, which, that whom	subject, for persons and things object of preposition, for persons
<b>que (qu')</b>	whom, which, that	object of verb, for persons and things
<b>lequel, etc.</b>	which	object of preposition, for things
<b>dont</b>	of whom, of which, whose	for persons and things
<b>ce qui</b>	what (= that which)	subject
<b>ce que (ce qu')</b>	what (= that which)	object of verb