

# THAT VS. WHICH

## WHAT ARE THEY AND WHEN TO USE THEM?



### THAT AND WHICH

Are relative pronouns used to connect a relative clause to a noun or pronoun. A relative clause contains a subject and a predicate and is used to **specify** which person or thing we are talking about, or to give **additional information**.

### THAT

Introduces **essential clauses**. These clauses give necessary information that is used to specify what it is we are talking about.

For example:  
I love the shirt **that you are wearing**.



### WHICH

Introduces **non essential clauses**, which are clauses that do not alter the meaning of the sentence if they are removed from the sentence.

For example:  
The book, **which you can find in any bookstore**, has all the information you need.

### REFERENTS

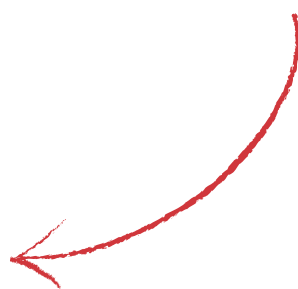
A referent is the person, animal or thing that a word stands for.

**THAT** can refer to people, animals and things.

**WHICH** refers to things and animals.

It can also refer to a whole sentence or clause.

For example:  
She seems really happy, **which is all that matters**.  
(underlined clause is the referent)



### COMMAS

**DO NOT** use commas with essential clauses.

For example:  
She is the girl **that I told you about**.

**USE COMMAS** with non essential clauses: a pair of commas if the clause is in the middle of the sentence, and use only one comma if the clause is at the end of the sentence.

For example:  
The car, **which was very expensive**, was destroyed in the accident.

For example:  
She told them she was busy, **which was a lie**.

