



Relative Pronouns in French: Who, Which, and That

KS4 FRENCH

GRAMMAR

Ages 14-16 ⌚ 3 min read

What Are Relative Pronouns?

In French, **relative pronouns** are special words that help us connect two ideas in one sentence. They do the job of **'who'**, **'which'**, and **'that'** in English. Instead of saying two separate sentences, we can join them together to make our writing smoother and more interesting.

For example, instead of saying "I have a friend. She speaks French," we can combine them: "I have a friend **who** speaks French."

Think of it like connecting building blocks — instead of having separate pieces lying around, you click them together to make something bigger and stronger.

The Three Main Relative Pronouns

Qui (who/that) is used when the relative pronoun is the **subject** of the clause — the person or thing doing the action. For example: "Le garçon **qui** court" means "The boy **who** runs." The boy is doing the running.

Que (which/that) is used when the relative pronoun is the **object** — the person or thing having something done to it. For example: "Le livre **que** j'aime" means "The book **that** I like." The book is being liked, not doing the liking.

Lequel, laquelle, lesquels, lesquelles (which) is a more formal relative pronoun used with **prepositions** like "à" (to) or "de" (of). For example: "La chaise sur **laquelle** je suis assis" means "The chair on **which** I am sitting."

Think of **qui** as the active player and **que** as the person being acted upon — one does the action, the other receives it.

Why Does It Matter?

Getting these pronouns right helps you write and speak more fluent French. Native speakers naturally know which one to use because it changes the meaning of the

sentence. Learning the difference between **qui** and **que** is one of the most important skills in French grammar at **GCSE level**.

The best way to master them is through practice — reading French texts, listening to French speakers, and writing your own sentences. Soon, choosing the right pronoun will feel as natural as breathing!