Name _____ Date _____

Commas, brackets, dashes

Put a pair of marks round a relative clause that adds extra information.

1 Learn



When a relative clause adds **extra** information, we can fence it off with a **pair** of commas, brackets or dashes. This is called **parenthesis**.

commas	Gran, who loves gardening, grew a giant pumpkin.
brackets	Gran (who loves gardening) grew a giant pumpkin.
dashes	Gran – who loves gardening – grew a giant pumpkin.

Add commas: Our school which is over a hundred years old has a bell tower.

1. Find the relative clause: **which is over a hundred years old**.
2. Is it extra? Take it out: "Our school has a bell tower." It still works, so yes.
3. Put one mark at the start and one at the end: Our school, which is over a hundred years old, has a bell tower.

Flip's tip: the marks come in pairs, like shoes. Use two the same: two commas, two brackets or two dashes. Never just one.

Warm up: draw a ring round the **pair** of marks in each sentence.

1. My cat, which is called Pip, loves boxes.
2. Mr Hill (who runs the café) gave us a biscuit.
3. The old bridge – which was built in 1850 – is closed today.

Grown-ups: read each version aloud with a small pause at each mark. Brackets and dashes do the same job as commas, and dashes feel a bit more chatty.

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2 Try it together

a child and a grown-up, about 10 minutes



Family facts, three ways

You need: a pencil, and two people you both know (family, friends or neighbours).

1. The grown-up says a short sentence about someone: "Uncle Tom grew a giant pumpkin."
2. The child adds an extra fact with **who**: "who loves gardening".
3. Write the sentence three ways in the table: with commas, brackets and dashes.
4. Read each one aloud. Which do you like best? Swap jobs for a second person.

Marks	Our sentence
, … ,	
(…)	
– … –	
Person 2	

Grown-ups: check the marks go right round the extra fact, with the first one just after the person's name.

3 Practise

A. Add the missing **pair of commas** round each relative clause.

1. Leo who is six can swim a whole length.
2. The Moon which travels round the Earth has no air.
3. Mrs Hill who loves maths gave us a puzzle.
4. Bramble Farm which is near our school has three goats.

Commas, brackets, dashes

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B. Tick the box if the sentence is right. If it is wrong, fix the marks on the sentence.

1. Ava, who is my best friend lives on our street. ☐
2. The tiger (which was fast asleep) did not see us. ☐
3. Leo who, plays the drums, is very loud. ☐
4. My aunt (who is a vet – looked at our rabbit. ☐
5. Grandad – who was a sailor – tells great stories. ☐

C. Write this sentence two more ways: once with **brackets**, once with **dashes**.

Sam, who was very hungry, ate three sandwiches.

D. Add your own relative clause as parenthesis. Use any pair of marks.

The giraffe _____ ate the leaves at the top of the tree.

Challenge

Ava wrote: **"Mum, who loves running ran a marathon."** She says one comma is fine because the sentence is short. Is she right? Explain.

I can...

Tick when you can.

- ☐ put a pair of commas round extra information
- ☐ use brackets or dashes in the same way
- ☐ spot when a mark is missing or in the wrong place