To the Teacher

Describer Clauses

Terminology
If you or your students learned traditional grammar terms for clauses, read the terminology section at the end.

TRUNK means an independent clause in this book, i.e., a sentence.
We are using the word **"clause"** to mean any dependent clause, i.e., a trunk with a clause word in front of it (often a fragment in student writing) .

A **describer clause** is a <u>clause</u> [that describes the word just in front of it.]

WORD ORDER: The clause words **who, where, which**, and **whose** look like question words, so students get confused about the word order.

      The man who did she marry is from California.

THAT: "that" has four main uses. See THAT

➡ As a clause word, "that" can be used for people or things

➡ As a clause word, "that" can often be omitted. When it's there, it's hard to hear, so students need to realize that the clause is there grammatically.

      I've lost the ring that I just bought.
      I've **lost** the **ring** ðət I just **bought**.
      I've lost the ring I just bought.

      (This looks like two trunks with no punctuation between them if you don't know that the clause word is missing.)

➡ When the clause is describing the **object**, "that" is optional.

Subject	X- MW -V	Object (what?)

Lydon/Gex/Hart

I	have lost	the ring.
I	just bought	the ring.
I	have lost	the ring (that) I just bought.

➡ When the clause's subject is different from the word that the clause is describing, "that" is optional.

The class is grammar.

We like the class the most.

The class [(that) we like the most] is grammar.

➡ HOWEVER, when the clause's **subject** is the same as the word that the clause is describing, "that" is **necessary**. It is acting as a clause word and subject of the clause.

The class is grammar.

The class is the most popular.

The class that is the most popular is grammar.

Extra pronouns:
Sometimes a student adds an extra pronoun because that's what their language does.   The man who she married him is from California.

WHOM
Someone will usually ask about "whom"

➡ According to *COCA* (http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/) *whom* is used most in phrases like **most of whom, one of whom,** etc.
➡ After a preposition, always use **whom,** not **who**.
       The woman **from whom** he learned the most was his grandmother.
       To whom am I speaking?
➡ In describer clauses, whom is more common after a person's name. (in a "non-restrictive" clause.)
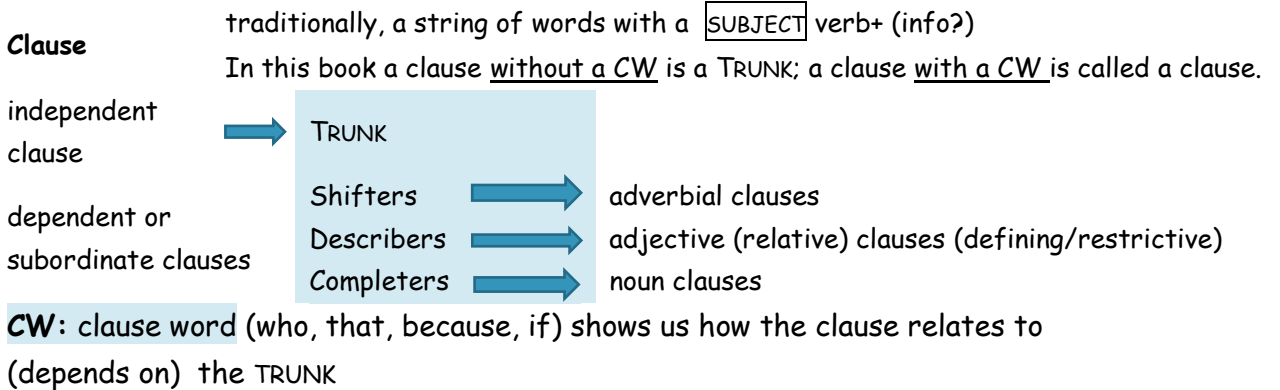   Dr. Daniels, **whom we had met several times before,** regaled us with new anecdotes at the party.

Frankly, the X-Word terminology is so much more intuitive that I have forgotten the traditional terms. I had to look them up to write this.

SUMMARY OF TRADITIONAL VS X-WORD TERMINOLOGY

X-Word terminology in blue

Clause

traditionally, a string of words with a SUBJECT verb+ (info?)

In this book a clause *without a CW* is a TRUNK; a clause *with a CW* is called a clause.

independent clause → TRUNK

dependent or subordinate clauses

Shifters → adverbial clauses
Describers → adjective (relative) clauses (defining/restrictive)
Completers → noun clauses

CW: clause word (who, that, because, if) shows us how the clause relates to (depends on) the TRUNK

In this book "clause" means dependent clause.

Describer clauses = relative clauses that are restrictive

In most grammar books, Describer Clauses are called "**Relative**" clauses because the clause relates to the word in front of it. Like a child, the clause is related to the word it describes and grammatically, the clause is dependent on it.

We have three sons. We're a family, so we are <u>related</u>.

The son who is still <u>dependent</u> on us just turned 45.

Restrictive clauses: In this book we are only looking at what traditional grammar calls **restrictive, limiting, essential, defining** or **identifying relative clauses**. The information that the clause adds makes that thing or person unique in this context.

The girl is a fashion major.

The girl [who is wearing the purple boots] is a fashion major.

The clause words are traditionally called **Relative Pronouns**. who, whose, whom, that, which..