



Essential and Nonessential Clauses

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English II

Objective: Using correct comma usage, we will be able to revise sentences containing nonessential clauses.

Essential vs. Nonessential

- If something is **essential**, what is it?
- **Essential**: required or necessary
- The suffix *non-* makes the word **nonessential** the opposite of essential.
- **Nonessential**: not required or necessary

Essential Clause

- **Essential clause**: the information in the clause is necessary to the understanding of the sentence
- **Essential** clauses will tell you which one.
- The garage *that my uncle built* is falling down.
- The person *checking tickets at the counter* asked for a form of identification.
- The woman *who interviewed you* is my sister .

Nonessential Clause

- **Nonessential clause:** Use commas before and after nonessential clauses that interrupt a sentence without changing the essential meaning.
- **Nonessential** clauses will tell you more information about the subject
- **Which** is a signal word for nonessential clauses.
- The novel, *which I really enjoyed*, deserves a second read.
- My uncle, *who is eighty years old*, walks three miles every day.
- CFU: What is the purpose of nonessential clauses? Why would you incorporate them in your writing?

The Big Question

- If you leave out the clause or put it somewhere else in the sentence, does the essential meaning of the sentence change? If so, the element is essential; if not, it is nonessential.

Examples

John Lucky **who lives across the street from me** won the California Lottery.

Born in Los Angeles Troy Ginn was educated at USC and later became a respected researcher there.

The sophomores **who pass the CAHSEE with a score of 380 or higher** will receive extended lunch privileges.

More Examples

- The shoes that were on sale are all sold out.
- My brother Michael who is in the Army came to visit me.
- After waxing the floors in the cafeteria Robert then began emptying the lockers.



Closure: What did you learn...

What are some characteristics of nonessential and essential clauses?

How can you determine the difference between a nonessential clause and an essential clause?

Write a sentence on your own that contains a nonessential clause. Go ahead and write another sentence that incorporates an essential clause!!!