Relative adjective clauses can be used to combine two sentences to create a single sentence that is more elegant and less wordy than the original two sentences. (Celce-Murcia, 571) For example:

Brown University is located in Providence. Brown University has been committed to academic excellence since 1764.

Brown University, which is located in Providence, has been committed to academic excellence since 1764.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Rules for Relative clauses:</th>
<th>Examples:</th>
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<td>Relative adjective clauses are dependent clauses which can’t stand alone.</td>
<td>Andrew is a man. Who loves his family.*&lt;br&gt;Andrew is a man who loves his family.</td>
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<td>These clauses often start with a relative pronoun: who whom which that whose when where why</td>
<td>Charlie, who loves to talk, is often in trouble with his teachers.&lt;br&gt;The professor whose class you are taking is an expert in his field.</td>
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<td>Generally speaking, use who/that to refer to people and which/that to refer to things.</td>
<td>I have a friend who/that loves to talk.&lt;br&gt;Fruits and vegetables are foods which/that can keep you healthy.</td>
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<td>When these relative pronouns are the subjects of the clauses, they cannot be omitted!</td>
<td>I have a friend loves to talk.*&lt;br&gt;I have a friend who/that loves to talk.</td>
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<td>When relative pronouns act as the object of verbs (and the clause has an identifiable subject), the relative pronouns are optional. In these clauses, use whom, who, that, or Ø for people and which, that, or Ø for things. Note that the level of formality changes depending on the pronoun you choose.</td>
<td>This is the professor to whom I was talking.&lt;br&gt;This is the professor who I was talking to.&lt;br&gt;This is the professor that I was talking to.&lt;br&gt;This is the professor I was talking to.</td>
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<td>Note: When using “whom” with a preposition, the preposition is fronted but comes at the end of the phrase in all other cases.</td>
<td>These are the flowers which he gave me.&lt;br&gt;These are the flowers that he gave me.&lt;br&gt;These are the flowers he gave me.</td>
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<td>Use the relative pronoun whose to indicate possession. Note that, when combining sentences, whose will generally take the place of a possessive adjective.</td>
<td>Jack practices basketball every day after school. + His team won the championship.&lt;br&gt;Jack, whose team won the championship, practices basketball every day after school.</td>
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**Relative Adjective Clauses (Cont.)**

| Use the relative pronoun where to introduce a clause that modifies a noun of place. Note that which can often be used as well but may require the fronting of a preposition. | This is the library where I study for exams.  
This is the library in which I study for exams.  
This is the restaurant where we ate Ethiopian food for the first time.  
This is the restaurant in/at which we ate Ethiopian food for the first time. |
|---|---|
| **Punctuation Matters!** Don't use commas to separate the relative clause when the clause is RESTRICTIVE or ESSENTIAL. A restrictive clause is one that specifically identifies the noun. | The student who made the first presentation was extremely well prepared.  
Which student? The one who made the first presentation.  
The professor who teaches my literature class is from Australia.  
Which professor? The one who teaches my literature class. |
| **Punctuation Matters!** Do use commas when the relative clause is NON-RESTRICTIVE or NON-ESSENTIAL. A non-restrictive clause adds extra information to the sentence. | Yoga, which is practiced throughout the world, is beneficial to overall health and well-being.  
Extra information – Separated by commas. |
| Note that the use of commas can sometimes change the meaning of your sentence. | The students who received good grades were happy.  
Restrictive: Only the ones who got good grades were happy.  
The students, who received good grades, were happy.  
Non-restrictive extra information: presumably the entire group got good grades. |
| Adjective clauses can sometimes be reduced to appositives. In these cases, you can eliminate the relative pronoun and delete BE. | George Washington, who was the first president, is rumored to have never told a lie.  
George Washington, the first president, is rumored to have never told a lie.  
The movie star who was riding on the parade float stopped to sign autographs.  
The movie star riding on the parade float stopped to sign autographs. |

**Works Cited:**

*Need more help: Email Rachel Toncelli, ELL Director, at ellwriting@brown.edu for a schedule of English Language Seminars.*