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Adjective Clauses

Definition

An **adjective clause** is a dependent clause that functions as an adjective by modifying a noun or pronoun in the sentence. These clauses typically begin with relative pronouns (who, whom, whose, which, that) or relative adverbs (where, when, why). They provide additional information about the noun they modify.

Structure of Adjective Clause

Component	Description	Example
Relative Pronoun or Adverb	Introduces the clause and connects it to the noun or pronoun in the main clause.	"The person who called you is waiting outside."
Subject and Verb	The clause contains its own subject and verb, forming a complete thought within the sentence.	The person who called you is waiting outside.
Connection to Main Clause	Provides additional information about a specific noun or pronoun in the main clause.	The person who called you is waiting outside.

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PART 1: Identifying Adjective Clauses

Underline the adjective clause in each sentence and circle the word it modifies.

1. The Sumerians, who lived in ancient Mesopotamia, were among the earliest civilizations to use wheels.
2. The clay tablets that archaeologists discovered contain information about early wheel designs.
3. The potter's wheel, which revolutionized pottery making, was one of the earliest wheel types.
4. The region where the wheel was invented is often called the "Cradle of Civilization."
5. The wooden axles whose design allowed for smoother rotation were a significant improvement.

PART 2: Relative Pronouns in Adjective Clauses

Choose the correct relative pronoun (who, whom, whose, which, that) to complete each sentence.

1. The ancient Sumerians, _____ lived around 3500 BCE, invented the earliest known wheels.
 - a) whom
 - b) who
 - c) whose
 - d) which

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2. The potter's wheel, _____ allowed artisans to create perfectly symmetrical pottery, predated transportation wheels.

- a) who
- b) whom
- c) whose
- d) which

3. The oxen _____ pulled the wheeled carts made transportation of heavy loads possible.

- a) who
- b) that
- c) where
- d) Whom

4. The four-wheeled wagons, _____ design remained largely unchanged for centuries, revolutionized transportation.

- a) whose
- b) who
- c) that
- d) which

5. The Sumerian merchants _____ traded goods using wheeled vehicles expanded their markets significantly.

- a) which
- b) who
- c) where
- d) whose

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PART 3: Relative Adverbs in Adjective Clauses

Complete each sentence with the appropriate relative adverb (where, when, why).

1. The ancient city of Ur, _____ many early wheel artifacts were found, was an important Sumerian center.

2. Around 3500 BCE was the period _____ historians believe the wheel was first developed in Mesopotamia.

3. The primary reason _____ wheels transformed society was their ability to reduce transport labor.

4. The royal tombs, _____ miniature wheeled models were discovered, provided valuable insights into Sumerian technology.

5. The invention of the wheel marked a turning point _____ human transportation capabilities changed forever.

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PART 4: Essential vs. Nonessential Adjective Clauses

Determine whether each adjective clause is essential or nonessential. Circle your answer.

1. The solid wooden wheels that early Sumerians used were heavy and difficult to maneuver.

Essential / Nonessential

2. The Sumerian cities, which were connected by wheeled transportation networks, traded extensively with each other.

Essential / Nonessential

3. Potters who mastered the wheel technique could produce more vessels in less time.

Essential / Nonessential

4. The wheel-axle combination, which was a breakthrough innovation, allowed for rotational movement under heavy loads.

Essential / Nonessential

5. The clay tablets that describe wheel manufacturing techniques have survived for thousands of years.

Essential / Nonessential

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PART 5: Creating Adjective Clauses

Combine each pair of sentences by turning the second sentence into an adjective clause.

1. The Sumerian artisans created intricate designs. These designs were carved into cylinder seals.
2. Mesopotamian chariots revolutionized warfare. These chariots had spoked wheels.
3. The potter's wheel increased production. This wheel was a significant technological advancement.
4. Wheels enabled more efficient trade networks. These trade networks expanded Sumerian influence.
5. Archaeologists have studied Sumerian artifacts. These archaeologists specialize in ancient technology.

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Adjective Clauses – Answer Key

ANSWER KEY

PART 1: Identifying Adjective Clauses

1. who lived in ancient Mesopotamia (modifies "Sumerians")
2. that archaeologists discovered (modifies "tablets")
3. which revolutionized pottery making (modifies "potter's wheel")
4. where the wheel was invented (modifies "region")
5. whose design allowed for smoother rotation (modifies "wooden axles")

PART 2: Relative Pronouns in Adjective Clauses

1. b) who
2. d) which
3. b) that
4. a) whose
5. b) who

PART 3: Relative Adverbs in Adjective Clauses

1. where
2. when
3. why
4. where
5. when

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Adjective Clauses – Answer Key

PART 4: Essential vs. Nonessential Adjective Clauses

1. Essential
2. Nonessential
3. Essential
4. Nonessential
5. Essential

PART 5: Creating Adjective Clauses

1. The Sumerian artisans created intricate designs that were carved into cylinder seals.
2. Mesopotamian chariots, which had spoked wheels, revolutionized warfare.
3. The potter's wheel, which was a significant technological advancement, increased production.
4. Wheels enabled more efficient trade networks that expanded Sumerian influence.
5. Archaeologists who specialize in ancient technology have studied Sumerian artifacts.