

The relative pronoun that

The relative pronoun *who* is only used to refer to people. *Which* is only used to refer to animals or objects. *That* can be used to refer to both people and objects. In some cases, *that* is preferred to *which*.

Cases where only *that* is possible

That should be used after superlative adjectives and other determiners like *all*, *same*, *any*, *none*, *nothing*, *only*, *everything*, *little*, *much* and *no*.

He is the same guy *that* picked my pocket yesterday. (More natural than 'He is the same guy *who* picked my pocket yesterday.')

This is the best book *that* was ever written about World War II. (NOT This is the best book *which* was ever written about World War II.)

None *that* participated in the contest won the prize. (More natural than 'None *who* participated in the contest won the prize.')

After *all*, *everyone*, *everybody*, *no one*, *nobody* and *those*, both *that* and *who* can be used.

Everyone *who* / *that* participated in the competition performed well.

All the candidates *who* / *that* wrote the exam made it to the rank list.

That should be used after the interrogative pronouns *what*, *which* and *who*.

What is the problem *that* worries you the most? (NOT What is the problem *which* worries you the most?)

Which is the phone *that* you would like to buy?

Who is the writer *that* you like the most?

Who and whom

Whom should be used after a preposition.

The girl *to whom* you spoke is my cousin. (NOT The girl *to who* you spoke is my cousin.)

The girl *from whom* you collected the books has called me.