



APEX ENGLISH

Your voice. Global.

B1 · GENERAL ENGLISH

UNIT 7 · B1·7B

Family, love & the extra info

Theme · Relationships



Unit 7 · B1·7B

Family, love & the extra info

Theme: Relationships

B1 · General English

Learning objectives

- Add extra, non-essential information about people, places and things.
- Use non-defining relative clauses correctly, with commas.
- Talk about family, love and the small annoyances that come with both.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Class Book

Warm-up · The family member who...

Complete this sentence three times, with three DIFFERENT family members: 'My ____, who ____, always ____.'
Say each sentence out loud.

A close one first.

Then a distant one.

Then a funny or annoying one.

Lead-in · Agony aunt mailbox

Read each short letter. Write ONE piece of advice for each writer. Then compare with a partner.

1. Dear reader, My sister, who is 3 years older than me, still treats me like a child. I'm 34. Every family dinner ends the same way — with me feeling 12. What do I do? — Tired in Coimbra

2. Dear reader, My partner's mother, who I honestly don't dislike, calls him three times a day. He always picks up. We've been together 4 years and I'm starting to feel like a third wheel. Is this normal? — Third Wheel in Braga

3. Dear reader, My son, who is 19, has stopped talking to me since he moved to university. Not a fight — just silence. I don't want to be the pushy mum, but I miss him. Advice? — Missing You in Porto

4. Dear reader, My boyfriend's best friend, who I've never really trusted, is his groomsman. I have to sit next to him at the wedding. Can I speak up? — Nervous Bride

followUp: Which letter felt closest to something in your own life? Which advice would you struggle to take?

Reading · The uncle we don't talk about

Every family has one. The relative you don't quite explain to your foreign friends. In mine, it's my uncle Paulo, who once sold my grandmother's fridge without telling anyone, and who — three years later — turned up at Christmas as if nothing had happened.

Families are strange because we didn't choose them. Friends we choose; partners we (mostly) choose; colleagues sometimes; but family is what we inherit, complete with strange smells, old jokes, and the uncle who sold the fridge. My grandmother, who is 87 and forgets almost everything, still remembers the exact day and the exact price. €80. In 1998.

The great secret of family life is that we forgive everything because we have to. Not because we're saintly — because the alternative is a lifetime of empty Sunday lunches. So we tell the fridge story every year. Paulo laughs the loudest. And my grandmother, who never forgives strangers, forgives him again.

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That, in the end, is what family means.

1. What did Paulo do to the grandmother?
(A) Stole her keys
(B) Sold her fridge without telling anyone
(C) Missed Christmas
2. What does the writer say about family?
(A) We choose them like friends
(B) We inherit them, complete with their strangeness
(C) We can leave whenever we want
3. Why does the family forgive Paulo, according to the writer?
(A) Because they're saintly
(B) Because the alternative is empty Sundays
(C) Because he apologised

Vocabulary in context

Match the phrase to its meaning.

turned up — appeared, arrived unexpectedly

as if nothing had happened — pretending the past incident didn't happen

inherit — get from your family (money, name, etc.)

the alternative — the other option

True / False / Not Given

Based only on the text.

1. Paulo apologised for selling the fridge.
(A) True
(B) False
(C) Not Given
2. The grandmother forgets almost everything.
(A) True
(B) False
(C) Not Given
3. The writer thinks we forgive family because we're saintly.
(A) True
(B) False
(C) Not Given

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4. The story is told at every Christmas.

- (A) True
- (B) False
- (C) Not Given

React to the text

Answer in 2–3 sentences.

1. Does YOUR family have an 'uncle Paulo' story? What is it?

2. Do you agree that families forgive because 'the alternative is worse'?

Scan for meaning

Find the word or phrase from the text.

1. appeared, arrived unexpectedly

2. get something from your family

3. the other option

Vocabulary · Family & feelings

relative — any family member

nephew / niece — your sibling's son / daughter

cousin — your aunt's or uncle's child

step-parent — the new partner of your parent

sibling — brother or sister (formal)

only child — with no brothers or sisters

take after — look or behave like a family member

get on with — have a good relationship with

grow apart — slowly stop being close

hold in high esteem — admire and respect

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indulge (a child) — give too much of everything

have a particular fondness for — have a special affection for

practice

Complete each sentence with ONE word or phrase from the lists.

1. I really ____ my grandfather — same eyes, same jokes.

2. My little ____ is 4 and she's my sister's daughter.

3. We ____ after university — different cities, different lives.

4. My grandmother has a ____ my youngest brother — always slips him a chocolate.

5. I've always ____ my aunt Sofia — she went to Angola alone at 22.

6. My ____ from Braga is coming to visit — my uncle's son.

Collocations · family & feelings

Match each verb with its noun.

raise — a child / a family / concerns

adopt — a child / a pet / a habit

have — an argument / a big family / a soft spot

settle — a fight / down / a bill

cut ties — with someone / with an ex / with the past

Odd one out

Choose the word that does NOT belong.

1. cousin · niece · nephew · pineapple

(A) cousin

(B) niece

(C) nephew

(D) pineapple

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2. sibling · step-parent · relative · sunset

- (A) sibling
- (B) step-parent
- (C) relative
- (D) sunset

3. adopt · raise · spoil · defrost

- (A) adopt
- (B) raise
- (C) spoil
- (D) defrost

Word building · verb ↔ noun ↔ adjective

Complete each set.

utility:

1. marry (v) → a ____ (n) → he's ____ (adj)

2. divorce (v) → a ____ (n) → she's ____ (adj)

3. parent (n) → to ____ (v) → good ____ (n)

Grammar · Non-defining relative clauses (with commas)

1. Extra, non-essential information — Adds detail we could remove without losing the main idea. • My uncle Paulo, WHO once sold my grandmother's fridge, is coming for Christmas. • Coimbra, WHICH is famous for its university, is my hometown. Remove the clause and the sentence still stands.

2. TWO commas — one before, one after (unless the sentence ends) — • Ana, who I met at university, lives in Braga now. ■ • Ana who I met at university lives in Braga now. ■ (no commas → wrong meaning)

3. Never use THAT in non-defining clauses — • My grandmother, THAT is 87, forgets everything. ■ • My grandmother, WHO is 87, forgets everything. ■ Use WHO / WHICH / WHOSE / WHERE — never 'that'.

4. You CANNOT drop the pronoun — • Coimbra, is my hometown, ■ • Coimbra, WHICH is my hometown, is beautiful. ■ Compare defining clauses (7A), where you sometimes can.

Exercise A — Add the right pronoun

Complete with WHO, WHICH, WHERE, or WHOSE.

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1. My cousin Ana, ____ lives in Berlin, is visiting next week.

2. Coimbra, ____ is famous for its university, is my hometown.

3. My grandmother, ____ house we visited every summer, sold it last year.

4. Lisbon, ____ I lived for six years, is still my favourite city.

5. My brother Rui, ____ never remembers birthdays, sent me a card yesterday!

Exercise B — Add the missing commas

Rewrite each sentence with the correct commas.

1. My uncle Paulo who lives in Aveiro is a total character.

2. Coimbra which has one of the oldest universities in Europe is where I studied.

3. My grandmother whose recipes I still use died last year.

Exercise C — Defining or non-defining?

Write DEFINING or NON-DEFINING for each sentence, and add commas if needed.

1. My brother who lives in London is coming home for Christmas.

2. The book that I bought yesterday is amazing.

3. Lisbon which is Portugal's capital has changed a lot.

Exercise D — Combine into ONE sentence

Join each pair using a non-defining clause (with commas).

1. My aunt Fátima is a lawyer. She lives in Faro.

2. Porto is famous for its wine. It's Portugal's second city.

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3. My grandmother sold her house. Her recipes are in a small red notebook.

Exercise E — About you

Write one sentence about each person using a non-defining relative clause.

1. Your mother.

2. A cousin.

3. Your hometown.

Exercise F — Complete the mini-story

Complete each gap with the correct pronoun AND add commas if needed.

1. My grandfather ____ was a fisherman in Nazaré ____ is a village on the Atlantic coast ____ used to bring us fresh sardines every Sunday.

2. My best friend ____ birthday I always forget ____ still forgives me every year.

Listening · Meet the family — a Sunday lunch briefing

One partner briefs the other on the way to meet the family for the first time. Notice the non-defining clauses — every relative gets extra info.

pre

How did YOU meet the family of your partner (or a friend) for the first time?

What's the golden rule for a first family lunch?

gist

1. What is the situation?

2. Which relative should Voice B avoid arguing with?

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3. What food is being served?

detail

1. Who is Maria and what is her role?

2. What must Voice B NOT mention?

3. Which family member is the easy one?

Third listen — read between the lines

Answer from what is IMPLIED.

1. Is this a warm or a stressful family?

2. How does Voice B feel about the briefing?

Useful language from the audio

Match each phrase to what it does.

"Uncle Zé, who never wins an argument, never loses one either." — non-defining clause with WHO

"Grandma Maria, who is 91, might try to feed you cake." — extra info about a specific person

"Cozido, which is basically a heavy stew, is today's menu." — non-defining clause with WHICH

"Cousin Rui, whose ex is called Ana — don't mention Ana." — non-defining clause with WHOSE

"You'll be fine — just smile a lot." — reassurance

Voice A: OK, briefing time — we're 10 minutes away. Ready?

Voice B: Terrified. Go.

Voice A: First: Uncle Zé, who never wins an argument, never loses one either. Just smile.

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Voice B: Just smile. Got it.

Voice A: Grandma Maria, who is 91, might try to feed you cake until you cry. If she likes you, this is a compliment. Do not refuse the second slice.

Voice B: Even if I'm dying?

Voice A: Especially if you're dying. Food: cozido, which is basically a heavy stew. Eat slowly. Never say no.

Voice B: Anything I shouldn't mention?

Voice A: Politics. Football, unless it's Benfica. And cousin Rui, whose ex is called Ana — don't mention Ana. Any Ana. All Anas are dangerous today.

Voice B: This is a nightmare.

Voice A: Rescue plan: my cousin Sofia, who's 25 and speaks perfect English, will rescue you if you look lost. Look lost strategically.

Voice B: OK — I'm going to smile, eat slowly, and stalk Sofia. Let's do this.

Voice A: You'll be fine. And they'll love you. They already love you — they just don't know it yet.

Fourth listen — fill the gaps

Listen again and complete the exact phrases.

1. Uncle Zé, ____ never wins an argument, never loses one either.

2. Grandma Maria, ____ is 91, might try to feed you cake.

3. Cozido, ____ is basically a heavy stew, is today's menu.

4. Cousin Rui, ____ ex is called Ana — don't mention Ana.

Speaking · Brief a partner about YOUR family

Imagine your partner is meeting your family this Sunday. Give them a briefing — 4 relatives, one non-defining clause each, one forbidden topic per person.

Scene: Meeting the family for a first big lunch

A: You: the local — briefing your partner in the car.

B: You: the newcomer. Ask 3 practical questions.

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Scene: Meeting your future in-laws for the engagement dinner

A: You: nervous, want your partner to shine.

B: You: even more nervous, mostly listening.

Scene: Bringing a foreign friend to a Portuguese family Christmas

A: You: the local, warning your friend about the small chaos.

B: You: the friend, curious and slightly worried.

Discussion · family

Choose 2 questions and speak for 30–45 seconds each.

What's ONE tradition your family has that you'd never break?

Do you have a family member you 'take after' most? In what way?

Is it easier to be an only child, or one of many? Why?

What's the WORST family lunch you've ever survived?

Role-play · Introducing your partner to your parents

Read your role, prepare, then run the conversation for 2 minutes.

Scene: First introduction — coffee at your parents' house

A: You: the child, playing referee between two worlds.

B: You: the partner, meeting the parents for the first time. Ask 2 questions to break the ice.

Mini-presentation · 60-second family portrait

Deliver a 60-second portrait of your family using at least THREE non-defining clauses.

Beat 1 (10s) — Family size and where they live.

Beat 2 (15s) — One person, with extra info.

Beat 3 (20s) — One story that captures the family's personality.

Beat 4 (15s) — What you love most about them.

sample: My family is small but loud. My mother, who has taught in the same school for 30 years, still corrects my grammar in WhatsApp messages. My father, whose only hobby is fishing, comes home empty-handed almost every Saturday and still calls it 'a great morning'. The story that captures them best: they've bought me the exact same birthday cake — chocolate with strawberries — every year since I was 5. What I love most is that they're still surprised when it makes me happy.

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Writing · A short family portrait

Write 80–100 words describing *THREE* family members. Use at least 3 non-defining relative clauses with commas.

bonus: Bonus — Rewrite the same portrait without any extra info (defining only). Which version tells us more?

Wrap-up · What did we cover?

Non-defining clauses = extra info, with commas.

Use who / which / whose / where — never THAT.

You cannot drop the pronoun in a non-defining clause.

Family is inherited, not chosen — that's what makes it strange and beautiful.

Quiz

1. "My mother, ____ is a teacher, lives in Coimbra."
(A) that
(B) who
(C) which
2. "Porto, ____ is famous for its wine, is Portugal's second city."
(A) that
(B) who
(C) which
3. Which sentence needs COMMAS?
(A) The book that I bought yesterday is on the table.
(B) My cousin Ana who lives in Berlin is visiting.
(C) The friend who called me lives in Braga.
4. "My grandmother, ____ recipes I still use, died last year."
(A) who
(B) which
(C) whose
5. 'To take after someone' means...
(A) to argue with them
(B) to look or behave like them
(C) to visit them

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Workbook — home practice

1. Vocabulary recall

Complete each sentence with the best word from the class-book lesson.

1. Write ONE new word from the lesson and its meaning in your own words.

2. Write ONE collocation from the lesson and use it in a sentence about your life.

3. Write ONE phrase you'd use in real conversation this week.

2. Grammar practice · Non-defining relative clauses

Rewrite each sentence using the target grammar of this lesson.

1. Sentence 1 → rewrite it correctly with the target grammar.

2. Sentence 2 → rewrite it correctly with the target grammar.

3. Sentence 3 → find and fix ONE mistake.

4. Sentence 4 → complete the gap with the correct form.

5. Sentence 5 → write your own example, true about you.

3. Reading recall

Look back at the class-book reading. Answer briefly in your own words.

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1. What was the main idea in ONE sentence?

2. What is ONE opinion of the writer you agree with?

3. What is ONE opinion you disagree with, and why?

4. Listening · a follow-up dialogue

Two voices talk about relationships for about a minute. Notice the target grammar in use.

1. What is the main topic of the conversation?

2. Who sounds more confident and why?

3. Which target-grammar phrase appears TWICE in the audio?

Voice A: So — tell me about your relationships this week. Anything different?

Voice B: Honestly, yes. I've been trying something new — and it's changed how I feel completely.

Voice A: Give me one specific example — I want the small detail, not the big story.

Voice B: OK: I stopped checking my phone before bed. Just that. And I already sleep better.

5. Writing · a short reflection

Write 70–100 words about the theme of this lesson. Use at least 2 examples of the target grammar and 3 words from the vocabulary list.

6. Reflection

Look back at your notes from class. Answer briefly.

1. What is ONE thing from this lesson you already use naturally?

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2. What is ONE thing you'd like to practise more this week? How exactly?

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Answer key — Class Book

Lead-in · Agony aunt mailbox

1. Model: 'Talk to her ONCE, calmly, away from a family dinner. Say the specific line that hurts. If nothing changes, stop reacting — silence is often more powerful than a fight.'
2. Model: 'It's cultural for some families and it takes years to shift. Don't ask him to call less — ask for one protected evening a week that is only you two.'
3. Model: 'Send one message a week with no question in it — a photo, a memory, a stupid joke. No pressure to reply. Curiosity, not guilt, brings kids back.'
4. Model: 'Don't try to change the friendship — you can't. But you CAN tell your boyfriend, once, why you feel uneasy. Then focus on your wedding — one seat is only 5 hours.'

Reading · The uncle we don't talk about

1. (B) Sold her fridge without telling anyone
2. (B) We inherit them, complete with their strangeness
3. (B) Because the alternative is empty Sundays
1. (C) Not Given
2. (A) True
3. (B) False
4. (A) True
1. Model: yes — my aunt once brought a stranger to our Christmas dinner and never explained who he was. Fifteen years later, still a mystery.
2. Model: partly. I think for small things yes; for big things (real betrayal) it isn't automatic and shouldn't be.
1. turned up
2. inherit
3. the alternative

Vocabulary · Family & feelings

1. take after
2. niece
3. grew apart
4. particular fondness for
5. held in high esteem
6. cousin
1. (D) pineapple
2. (D) sunset
3. (D) defrost
1. marriage / married
2. divorce / divorced
3. to parent / parenting

Grammar · Non-defining relative clauses (with commas)

1. who
2. which
3. whose
4. where
5. who
1. My uncle Paulo, who lives in Aveiro, is a total character.
2. Coimbra, which has one of the oldest universities in Europe, is where I studied.
3. My grandmother, whose recipes I still use, died last year.
1. NON-DEFINING (only one brother) → My brother, who lives in London, is coming home for Christmas. //
2. DEFINING (many brothers) → keep as is.
2. DEFINING — no commas.
3. NON-DEFINING → Lisbon, which is Portugal's capital, has changed a lot.
1. My aunt Fátima, who lives in Faro, is a lawyer.
2. Porto, which is Portugal's second city, is famous for its wine.

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3. My grandmother, whose recipes are in a small red notebook, sold her house.
1. Model: My mother, who has always worked long hours, taught me to cook when I was 8.
2. Model: My cousin Rui, whose Portuguese is worse than mine, lives in Toronto.
3. Model: Coimbra, where I grew up, is smaller than most people imagine.
1. , who / , which is / , // My grandfather, who was a fisherman in Nazaré, which is a village on the Atlantic coast, used to bring us fresh sardines every Sunday.
2. , whose // My best friend, whose birthday I always forget, still forgives me every year.

Listening · Meet the family — a Sunday lunch briefing

1. Voice A is briefing Voice B in the car, on the way to Voice A's family Sunday lunch.
2. Uncle Zé — 'never wins an argument, never loses one either'. Just smile.
3. Cozido — a heavy Portuguese stew. Voice B should eat slowly and never refuse a second helping.
1. Voice A's grandmother, who is 91, and 'if she likes you she'll try to feed you cake until you cry'.
2. Politics, football (unless it's Benfica), and cousin Rui's ex-girlfriend.
3. Cousin Sofia, who's 25, speaks perfect English, and 'will rescue you if you look lost'.
1. Warm but chaotic — lots of characters, lots of food, lots of forbidden topics. It's the classic loving-loud family.
2. Slightly overwhelmed but excited — asks questions, laughs, and only starts sweating when told about Grandma Maria's cake ritual.
1. who
2. who
3. which
4. whose

Quiz

1. (B) who
2. (C) which
3. (B) My cousin Ana who lives in Berlin is visiting.
4. (C) whose
5. (B) to look or behave like them

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Answer key — Workbook

1. Vocabulary recall

1. Open answer — check with your teacher.
2. Open answer.
3. Open answer.

2. Grammar practice · Non-defining relative clauses

1. Model answer — see class notes.
2. Model answer — see class notes.
3. Model answer — see class notes.
4. Model answer — see class notes.
5. Open answer.

3. Reading recall

1. Open answer — around 15 words.
2. Open answer.
3. Open answer — 2 sentences.

4. Listening · a follow-up dialogue

1. Model: both speakers compare their own experience of relationships.
2. Open answer — look for specific detail and full sentences.
3. Open answer — see transcript.

6. Reflection

1. Open answer.
2. Open answer — be specific: what, when, how often.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class