INTRODUCTION TO RELATIVE PRONOUNS QUI & QUE
Twenty-fifth lesson – Vingt-cinquième leçon
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1. DEFINITION

- Relative pronouns (*who, whom, whose, which, that*) link two phrases to reduce repetition.

- They introduce **relative clauses** that describe, define or expand on the main clause.
1. DEFINITION

- In English, some relative pronouns can be omitted, thus:
  - *The book that Mary bought for Paul is a medieval novel.*
  - *The book Mary bought for Paul is a medieval novel*

- are both acceptable.
In French, however, the use of relative pronouns is compulsory.

- *Le livre que Paul a acheté est un roman médiéval.*
  - *The book that Paul bought is a medieval novel.*

- *Le livre ø Paul a acheté est un roman médiéval.*
  - ➔ *This isn’t acceptable.*
1. DEFINITION

- In English we normally use *who*/*whom* when referring to a person, and *that* or *which* when referring to anything other than a person.

- *The one who arrives first is the winner!*  

- *The letters that are on the table are for you.*
1. DEFINITION

- There is no such distinction in French: **qui** and **que** is used for a person, animal, object, idea etc.

  - *L’homme qui chante est un de mes amis.*
  - *The man who is singing is one of my friends.*

  - *Le canari est un oiseau qui chante.*
  - *The canary is a bird that sings.*

  - *L’homme que je vois est un chanteur.*
  - *The man that I see is a singer.*

  - *L’oiseau que je vois est un canari.*
  - *The bird that I see is a canary.*
1. DEFINITION

- A different distinction can be made with **qui** and **que**: that of whether they refer to the subject or object of the main clause.
1. DEFINITION

- The same distinction exists in English with *who/whom*. *Whom* is often replaced with *who* in informal speech.

- In French the correct form must always be used.
2. ABOUT « QUI »

- The relative pronoun **qui** refers to the **subject** of the main clause.

- Unlike **que**, which changes form depending on the word that follows it, **qui** does not change.

  - *Le cahier qui est dans mon sac n'est pas à moi.*
    - *The book that is in my bag isn’t mine.*

  - *Ce sont les professeurs qui notent les tests.*
    - *It is the professors that mark the tests.*

- In both of the above examples, **qui** refers to the subject of the main clause: *le cahier, les professeurs.*
3. ABOUT « QUE »

The relative pronoun que refers to the object of the main clause. It becomes qu’ when followed by a vowel or a mute H.

- Est-ce que tu as oublié le film qu’on a vu?
- Have you forgotten about the movie that we saw?

- Ma petite sœur ne lit pas les livres que je lui achète!
- My little sister doesn’t read the book that I bought her.
TO SUMMARIZE:

- As a general rule:
  - *qui* is normally followed by a *verb*.
  - *que* is normally followed by a *noun* or *pronoun*. 
When “what” is used to joint two clauses, it is an indefinite relative pronoun.

There are two basics ways to translate it into French.
4. Translating « what »

4.1 « what » is the subject of the verb

- Je ne sais pas ce qui se passe.
- I don’t know what is happening.
4. TRANSLATING « WHAT »

4.2 « what » is the complement of the verb

- *Je ne comprends pas ce que vous dites.*
- *I don’t understand what you are saying.*
5. **More about qui & que**

- Use qui & que to ask questions
  - *What...?*
  - *Who .. .?*
  - *(To) Whom...?*
5. More about qui & que

5.1 Que: interrogative pronoun

- *Qu’est-ce que vous voulez?/Que voulez-vous?*
  - What do you want?

- *Qu’est-ce que tu penses de mon projet?/Que penses-tu de mon projet?*
  - What do you think about my project?

- *Qu’est-ce que c’est?*
  - What is that?
5. **More about qui & que**

- When translating “what + verb with preposition”, **que** changes to **quoi**.
  
  - *De quoi* est-ce que vous parlez? *De quoi* parlez-vous?
  - What are you talking about?
5. More about qui & que

5.2 Qui: interrogative pronoun

- Qui aimez-vous le plus? Votre père ou votre mère?
  - Who do you like the most? Your father or your mother?

- Qui veut répondre à cette question?
  - Who wants to reply to this question?

- Qui parle? Qui est-ce qui parle?
  - Who’s speaking?

- Qui est-ce?
  - Who is this?
5. More about qui & que

When **translating** the idea of « to whom », **qui** follows a preposition and doesn’t change:

- À *qui* est-ce que tu téléphones? À *qui* téléphones-tu?
  - *Who are you calling?*
To summarise

Relative pronouns
- Qui
- Que
- Ce qui
- Ce que

Interrogative pronouns
- Qui
- Que
- À qui
- De quoi
C’est tout pour aujourd’hui!

Au revoir!

Merci!