Relative Clauses

You have already learned that adjectives modifying nouns preceded the noun.

おもしろいクラス
fun class
adjective noun

きれいな町
pretty town
adjective noun

In the examples above, a word modifies another word.

When a whole clause modifies a noun, the clause usually takes the form of a relative clause. In English, the relative clause follows the noun it modifies. (*Clause = a group of words containing a subject and verb)

noun relative clause

the person who came here yesterday

the person whom I saw yesterday

the hamburger that I ate three days ago

a house where I lived for ten years

In English a relative clause is introduced with a relative pronoun or adverb such as: WHO, WHOM, WHICH, and WHERE

Japanese relative clauses, like their English counterparts, modify nouns. However, there are some striking differences between the two languages.
1. Relative clauses in Japanese precede nouns that they modify.

   English:  \[ \text{noun \hspace{1em} relative \hspace{1em} clause} \]
   
   Japanese:  \[ \text{relative \hspace{1em} clause \hspace{1em} noun} \]

2. There are no relative pronouns or adverbs required in Japanese. Relative clauses directly precede the nouns they modify.

   English:  \[ \text{The \hspace{1em} pizza \hspace{1em} THAT \hspace{1em} I \hspace{1em} ate \hspace{1em} yesterday} \]
   
   Japanese:  \[ \text{昨日わたしが食べた \hspace{1em} ピザ} \]

\[ \text{nagaee \hspace{1em} sensei \hspace{1em} wa} \]  
\[ \hspace{1em} kettei \hspace{1em} shi \hspace{1em} negatte} \]

\[ \text{The \hspace{1em} person \hspace{1em} whom \hspace{1em} Nagae-sensei \hspace{1em} was \hspace{1em} talking \hspace{1em} to} \]

\[ \text{わたしが好きな \hspace{1em} 本} \]
\[ \text{The \hspace{1em} book \hspace{1em} that \hspace{1em} I \hspace{1em} like} \]

As you see from the examples, to form a relative clause in Japanese, you simply position a clause before a noun. Note that verb forms used in relative clauses must be PLAIN FORMS.

\[ \text{O \hspace{1em} ピザ \hspace{1em} も \hspace{1em} ピザ} \]
\[ \text{X \hspace{1em} ピザ} \]

POLITE FORMS ARE NOT USED in relative clauses and the topic particle は is not used within relative clauses, but the subject marker, が is used instead. The possessive marker の is often used substituted for the subject particle が in relative clauses and other noun-modifying clauses. (The subject could be dropped when it is obvious by the context.)

\[ \text{昨日私が食べた \hspace{1em} ピザ} \hspace{1em} \text{(昨日食べた \hspace{1em} ピザ)} \]

\[ \text{昨日私の食べた \hspace{1em} ピザ} \hspace{1em} \text{(昨日食べた \hspace{1em} ピザ)} \]
The movie that I watched yesterday

The place where I always study

The park where I went yesterday

The camera that my father bought

The person who was at the park

A noun modified by a relative clause is a noun clause and may be used in a sentence anywhere a noun can be used.

The pizza that I ate yesterday was good.

The movie that I watched yesterday was boring.

The park where I went was pretty.

The person who was at the cafe Rome is my friend.

- **Relative Clause Plain form** + **Noun**
- **Topic Particle** は is NOT used within Relative Clauses