Will
Hello and welcome to today’s Grammar Gameshow! I’m your host, Will. Could anything be more affirming? And of course, let’s not forget Leslie, our all-knowing voice in the sky.

Leslie
Good morning, everyone!

Will
Today, we’re going to be asking three questions about…

Leslie
Relative clauses! That useful grammar that allows you to modify a noun!

Will
OK! Let’s see how our contestants are doing! Good morning! You spent Saturday and Sunday locked up in our studio due to last episode’s lockdown. Lucky you! There’s nothing quite like a lazy weekend, is there? I feel so refreshed. How was yours?

Levington
So cold…so hungry.

Will
And contestant number two?

Kate
Please, I need a phone. I haven’t been home for days! My family’s going to be worried about me.

Will
No, I’m afraid we block all mobile phone signals in the studio to prevent cheating. Not to worry! Nice to see you both again looking so well. OK. Let’s get going, and don’t forget you can play along at home too. Question one. We know that ‘who’, ‘which’, ‘that’ and ‘whose’ can be used as relative pronouns. However, relative adverbs ‘when’ and ‘where’ can also be used for talking about places and times. They can always be replaced by a preposition and ‘which’. Look at these sentences and tell me how to replace ‘when’ or ‘where’. That was the day when I fell in love.
Kate
On which. That was the day on which I fell in love.

Leslie
Correct!

Will
This is the place where I found the money.

Levington
At which. This is the place at which I found the money.

Leslie
Correct!

Will
A bank is a place where you can withdraw money.

Levington
From which. A bank is a place from which you can withdraw money.

Leslie
Correct!

Will
That was the time when the train departed.

Kate
At which. That was the time at which the train departed.

Leslie
Correct!

Will
Leslie?

Leslie
Excellent! ‘When’ and ‘where’ are relative adverbs that describe places or times, and that can be used in the same way as ‘who’, ‘which’, ‘whose’ and ‘that’. However, ‘when’ and ‘where’ can always be replaced by ‘which’ and a preposition. The choice of preposition depends on the context, so be careful!
Will
Well done both of you! Three points each. On to question two. We’ve just seen that sometimes relative clauses have prepositions in them. How does the position of the preposition relate to the relative clause’s formality?

Levington
The preposition can be in two positions – immediately before the relative clause or at the end of the relative clause.

Will
Leslie?

Leslie
Well done! The preposition can appear in two positions. If it appears before the relative pronoun, the sentence is more formal – this is in a more written style. If it is at the end of the relative clause, the sentence is less formal – this is more spoken.

Will
Good job. Two points for you. Let’s have a quick-fire practice round, eh? Look at these sentences and tell me if they’re formal or informal. This is the hospital in which I was born.

Kate
Formal.

Leslie
Correct!

Will
There’s the boy (who) I got the book from.

Levington
Informal.

Leslie
Correct.

Will
This is the medicine (which) your friend can’t live without.

Levington
Informal.

Leslie
Correct!
Will
She’s the business person from whom I learned everything.

Kate
Formal.

Leslie
Correct!

Will
And for a bonus point, can you tell me why the last sentence was even more formal?

Kate
Not only is the preposition before the relative pronoun, but the speaker has used ‘whom’, which is an object form of ‘who’ and is also formal.

Will
Leslie?

Leslie
Well done Kate! ‘Whom’ is a relative pronoun used for people, but only when they are the object of the relative clause! It’s quite formal and not spoken much, but it looks nice in writing!

Will
Well done Kate! 66 points for you. It’s time for our last question and then you get to go home…one of you anyway. Question three. The last relative pronoun ‘what’ can also be used in relative clauses, but it is different. Look at this sentence and tell me why. A nice long holiday is what I need.

Levington
As a relative pronoun, ‘what’ means ‘the thing which’. A nice long holiday is the thing which I need.

Will
Leslie?

Leslie
Well done Levington. ‘What’ can be used as a relative pronoun to mean ‘the thing which’. But unlike other relative pronouns, which need or refer to a noun, ‘what’ is the noun and relative pronoun combined, so be careful!
Will
Good job Levington, have...a thousand points. Well, that brings us to the end of today’s Grammar Gameshow. Let’s count out the points...accounting for last show’s points...and the ones today...and a bit of...and carry the... And the winner is, Levington! Well done! Here’s what you’ve won!

Leslie
It’s breakfast! So tasty!

Levington
Food!

Will
We’ll see you next week, where you can play for another prize. And Kate, you’ve been through quite an ordeal, eh? Is there anything you want to say before...

Kate
Can I please just call my family? They must be worried sick.

Will
There’s no mobile phone service in the studio, I’m afraid...to discourage cheating. You understand.

Kate
Yes...I suppose...

Will
Call forth the lightning. It looks like we’ll need another contestant. Thanks for joining us. Say goodbye, Leslie.

Leslie
Sayonara, Leslie!

Will
See you next time!