

# WHAT verses WHICH

advanced  
upper-intermediate  
intermediate  
pre-intermediate

Grammar Focus: WHAT versus WHICH; WHAT in relative clauses; relative clauses; WHAT at the beginning of sentences

## WHAT = THE THING THAT

- We can start sentences with **WHAT** to express our emotions and opinions.  
*What I like about him is how he respects other people's opinions. (= **The thing** that I like about him is how he respects other people's opinions.)*
- **WHAT** can also connect two clauses. It is usually the object of a preceding verb.  
*I like **what** you said at the meeting. (= I like **the thing that** you said at the meeting.)*
- In relative clauses, when we refer to the whole preceding clause, we use **WHICH**, not **WHAT**.  
*He respects other people's opinions, **which** I like. (= I like the fact that he respects other people's opinions.)* **NOTE: WHICH should be preceded by a comma in such sentences**

### Activity 1. Fill the gaps with either **WHAT** or **WHICH**. Remember to insert a comma before **WHICH**.

- I'm sure you will regret ..... you have done.
- She didn't say a word ..... annoyed me.
- She wanted to fly immediately ..... was impossible.
- I don't know ..... I should do next.
- He had a gun in his hand ..... frightened me very much.
- He showed me ..... he bought for me.
- She didn't believe ..... I said.
- My boyfriend speaks five languages ..... is very useful when we travel abroad.
- He said he was single ..... was not true.
- They didn't tell us ..... they expected.

### Activity 2. Rewrite the sentences using **WHAT** at the beginning of each sentence.

**Example:** People are very rude here, which really annoys me.  
**What really annoys me is the fact that people are very rude here.**

- All my colleagues are ignorant, which drives me crazy.
- You never listen to me, which bothers me.
- People spend more and more time in front of their computers, which really disturbs me.
- Nobody believes me, which really frustrates me.
- My boss won't admit he has made a terrible mistake, which angers me.
- The band is going to break up, which disappoints me.