Using which and that correctly

- General rule
  
  **that**: introduces a restrictive clause (essential to the meaning of the sentence), used without comma

  **which**: reserved for nonrestrictive clauses (not essential to the meaning), used with comma

- Examples

  *The gene that causes luminescence was spliced into the chromosomes of a plant.*
  ...I do not know what gene is meant without the that clause.

  *This gene, which was isolated only recently, was spliced into the chromosomes of a plant.*
  ...gives only additional information about the gene we have been talking about and is therefore parenthetical.

  *The books that have red covers are new.*
  ...is limiting which books we are talking about

  *The books, which have red covers, are new.*
  ...adds information about the book

- Exceptions

  U.S. speakers use **which** for restrictive and nonrestrictive clauses, but find **that** clauses uncomfortable when set off in commas.

  **in which, of which, and that which**, whether the clause is restrictive or nonrestrictive
  
  *That* sometimes sounds wrong; then, replace it by **which**.

- Superfluity of the relative pronoun

  *The term which is related to the period of oscillation was calculated*

  ...removal of which + active voice:
  
  *We calculated the term related to the period of oscillation.*

- that (conjunction)

  **that** after a verb like show -> *He showed that...*

- that is

  usually a nonrestrictive phrase -> set off by commas:
  
  *Our model will yield a complete description, that is, a description including both amplitude and phase.*

  independent clause -> semicolon:
  
  *Our model will yield a complete description; that is, it will yield a description including both amplitude and phase.*

- that which

  ...can be replaced with the simpler and less formal **what**:

  *The intensity is less than that which would be observed with a closed path*
  
  *The intensity is less than **what** would be observed with a closed path.*