For more examples, refer to section 30f (page 244) of *The Everyday Writer* 3rd Edition.
**WHEN TO USE WHICH OR THAT**

**When to use “which”:**

In the sentences below, the underlined “which” clauses add **non-essential** information.

This means the information can be omitted without changing the meaning of the sentence.

Apache Street, which is only one block from where the tank truck crashed, is a residential street.

Daytona Beach, which is a favorite spring break destination for college students, has cracked down on underage drinking.

[Such clauses are referred to as **non-restrictive**]

**Punctuating “which” clauses:**

When the “which” clause adds information that can be removed without confusing the reader, use commas before and after the clause. Think of the commas as handlebars, which the reader can use to get rid of the information. Note the comma usage in the two examples above.

**When to use “that”:**

In these sentences, the underlined “that” clauses contain information that is **essential** to the reader because the information must be included to help the reader understand.

Contrast the above sentences to these:

The truck that spilled all its oil was heading east on Apache Street when the driver lost control and crashed.

The city that cracked down on underage drinking has lost much of the trade from the spring break college crowd.

[Such clauses are also referred to as **restrictive.**]

**Punctuating “that” clauses:**

If the clause cannot be removed without destroying the meaning of the sentence and confusing the reader, do not use commas around the “that” clause. Note the lack of commas in the examples above.

*For more information on “which vs. that”, see Mini Lesson #18: Relative Clauses*

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