THAT, WHICH, WHO

TERMS
Restrictive (Essential) clauses give essential information to the sentence.

Example
I visited the agency that deals in real estate.

The underlined clause tells what type of agency is being visited.

Non-restrictive (Nonessential) clauses give nonessential information. The clause could be removed from the sentence without changing the meaning.

Example
I completed my investigative report, which explored the aspects of the Jewish wedding ceremony.

This clause could be removed because it does not clarify the fact that the investigative report has been completed.

THAT
That is most commonly used to refer to non-specific people in restrictive clauses.

Awkward Example
My boss that was hired by the agency has experience selling real estate.

The person in the sentence is one specific woman, not any person.

Better Example
The agency is looking for someone that has experience in selling real estate.

That can also be used to refer to objects.

Example
The ball that hit me came from right field.
**Which**

*Which* is commonly used to refer to objects in non-restrictive clauses.

**Awkward Example**
The agent, which joined the company last month, fought for equality in the workplace.

**Better Example**
The agency, which was founded in 1982, was intended to ensure equal representation of minorities in the workplace.

**Awkward Example**
The baseball team trainer, which joined last month, helps bring revenue to the city.

**Better Example**
The baseball team, which is privately trained, brings revenue to the city.

*Which* can also be used for restrictive clauses. This is often determined by punctuation, or the lack thereof. This use is less common, often *that* is used instead.

**Restrictive Example**
The proposal which interested investors was the most reasonable.

**Non-Restrictive Example**
The team’s proposal, which interested the investors, was quite reasonable.