A relative pronoun introduces a clause that explains or describes a previously mentioned noun. In instances where the relative pronoun is the object of a preposition, relative pronouns other than *qui* and *que* must be used. *De* is the most common of these prepositions, and *dont* is the relative pronoun representing both the preposition *de* + its object.

**dont, où, lequel: relative pronouns with antecedent**

- **dont**
  Use *dont* if the subordinate clause needs an object introduced by *de*/*d’*. Such clauses may indicate possession or they may contain verbs which are followed by the preposition *de*. Some of these verbs include *’parler de’* (to talk about); *’avoir besoin de’* (to need); *’avoir peur de’* (to be afraid of); *’tenir de’* (to take after).

  Tex: Le livre *dont* je suis l’auteur est un roman historique.  
  Tex: The book *of which* I’m the author is an historical novel.

  Edouard, parlant du livre de Tex: Tex, *dont* le grand-père a combattu en France, en 40, a dédié ce livre à Paw-Paw.  

- **où**
  The relative pronoun *où* means ‘where, in which, on which.’ Use *où* if the subordinate clause needs an object indicating location introduced by *dans, à, sur, sous*. When used after adverbs of time, *où* means ‘when.’

  Paris, *where* the story starts, is going to be liberated by the Americans.

  Paw-Paw était à Paris le jour *où* les Américains sont entrés dans la ville.  
  Paw-Paw was in Paris the day *when* the Americans entered the city.

- **preposition + lequel, laquelle, lesquels, lesquelles**
  The relative pronouns *lequel, laquelle, lesquels, lesquelles* (which) are used when the relative clause is introduced by a preposition other than *de/*d’. These pronouns make the usual *contractions* with the prepositions *à* and *de*. Note that the preposition in French must always be placed immediately in front of the relative pronoun.

  Ce roman, *dans lequel* Tex utilise les souvenirs de guerre de Paw-Paw, est très réaliste.  
  This novel, *in which* Tex uses Paw-Paw’s war memories, is very realistic.
Les personnages, auxquels Tex s'identifie, sont des héros de la Résistance. His characters, with whom Tex identifies, are heroes of the Resistance.

L'homme à côté duquel Marie-Tammy est assise est un officier nazi. The man next to whom Marie-Tammy is seated is a nazi officer.

Les hommes parmi lesquels Marie-Tammy se trouve sont tous des nazis. The men among whom Marie-Tammy finds herself are all nazis.

Les deux femmes entre lesquelles l'officier se trouve font partie de la Résistance. The two women between whom the officer is seated are part of the Resistance.

Note: The form dont is generally used in spoken French instead of the forms duquel, de laquelle, desquels, and desquelles; however, these latter forms may also be found, especially in written texts. Dont may be substituted only for the simple preposition de and its object, but a form of lequel must be used when de is part of a two- or three-word preposition, such as 'à propos de, près de, loin de, à côté de.'

ce dont, ce + preposition + quoi : relative pronouns with no antecedent
In all the preceding examples, the relative pronouns have an antecedent; in other words, a specific word in the sentence for which the relative pronoun stands. Just as the forms ce qui and ce que are used when there is no explicit antecedent, so the forms ce dont and ce + preposition + quoi refer to something unstated and unspecified.

Use ce dont if the subordinate clause needs an object introduced by de.

On comprend très bien ce dont les Parisiens avaient peur pendant l'Occupation. One understands very well what the Parisians were afraid of during the Occupation.

Use ce + preposition + quoi when the subordinate clause needs an object introduced by a preposition other than de. Remember that, unlike English, the preposition in French must always be placed immediately in front of the relative pronoun.

Tout le monde va comprendre ce à quoi Tex fait allusion quand il décrit Jean-Tex et Marie-Tammy--il s'agit bien de Tex et Tammy, nos tatous favoris! Everybody's going to understand what Tex is alluding to when he describes Jean-Tex and Marie-Tammy--it's indeed a matter of Tex and Tammy, our favorite armadillos!

fill in the blanks
Fill in the blank with the correct relative pronoun: dont, où, lequel, ce dont or ce à quoi.

1. Tammy : Lyon est la ville _______ Tex a grandi.
2. Joe-Bob : Je n'ai pas lu le livre _______ tu parles.
3. Tex : Le roman dans _______ Marie-Tammy apparaît s'appelle Guerre et amour.
4. Fiona : Le garçon _______ Bette est amoureuse est ...Tex!
5. Bette : _______ je parle n'a rien à voir avec Tex.
6. Tammy : Tex, tu sais _______ je pense?
7. Tammy : Voici l'endroit _____ je veux me marier, Tex!
8. Tammy : Tex, tu es le tatou avec _______ je veux me marier!
9. Paw-Paw est un ancien combattant, _______ Tex est très fier.
11. Tex : Tu me demandes _______ je réfléchis? A mon prochain poème bien sûr!
12. Tammy : Le béret ______ j'ai fait cadeau à Tex est superbe.

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