

Who, Whom, Whose

GRAMMAR LESSON



Who, whom, and whose are pronouns and therefore have specific cases that dictate where each can be used in a sentence. When trying to determine which pronoun to use, you must first determine if the pronoun is acting as a subject, an object, or an indicator of possession. When trying to decide what role a pronoun is playing, it is often helpful to think of other pronouns that could be substituted for the one in question.

Who is a pronoun in the subjective case and must be used only as the subject of a verb.

Who went to the movies last weekend?

We use *who* because the pronoun acts as the subject for the verb *went*. In this instance, *who* could be replaced by another pronoun in the subjective case, such as *he, she, we, I, you*, etc.

Who does not have to be the subject of the entire sentence, though, and is often the subject of a clause instead.

The woman who owns the shop works in the morning.

In this sentence, the subject is *woman* and the verb going along with this subject is *works*. The clause *who owns the shop* is inserted between the subject and the verb. In this clause, *who* serves as a subject for the verb *owns* and is therefore correctly placed in the subjective case.

Whom is a pronoun in the objective case and must be used as the object of verbs or prepositions.

For whom are you looking?

We use *whom* because the pronoun acts as the object of the preposition *for*. In this instance, *whom* could be replaced by another pronoun in the objective case, such as *him, her, us, me, you*, etc. For example, you could respond to this question by saying, "I am looking for *him*."

Whose is a pronoun in the possessive case and must be used to indicate possession of an object.

Whose book is this?

We use "Whose" because the pronoun is indicating that the book belongs to someone. As in the other instances, *whose* could be replaced by another pronoun in the possessive case, such as *his, her, our, my, your*, etc. For example, you could respond to this question by saying, "This is *her* book."

Practice. Complete the following sentences with *who, whom, or whose*. (The exercises continue on the back side.)

Example: The man who has two dogs usually goes to the park during the evening.

1. My mother, for _____ I baked a cake, had her birthday party yesterday.
2. My sister, _____ son is two, works at the hospital.
3. My friend, with _____ I live, wants a cat.
4. The people _____ live there have a boat.
5. That is the lady _____ sculpture I bought.

6. My grandma, _____ is an excellent cook, made dinner.
7. To _____ should I address this letter?
8. The students _____ read the book gave a nice presentation.
9. _____ jacket is on the floor?
10. _____ wrote this book?
11. _____ are you going to recommend?
12. _____ dictionary is on the table?
13. It doesn't look as if this is the correct address. _____ did you ask for directions?
14. We have two extra tickets for the concert. _____ wants to go with us?
15. It wasn't me! I have no idea _____ left the oven on.
16. _____ car is parked in the handicapped parking space?
17. Melanie couldn't remember the name of the student _____ science project won.
18. I know exactly _____ I'm going to support in the upcoming election.
19. She's the actress _____ he so vividly describes in his scandalous new book.
20. That's the professor _____ spent ten years living with the Pygmies in Central Africa.

Points: _____ / 20