Who, Whom, and Whose

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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. For example, you could respond to this question by saying, “*We went to the movies last weekend.*”

**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 EXERCISES

Complete the following sentences with who, whom, or whose.

1. The man ___________ has two dogs usually goes to the park during the evening.
2. My mother, for __________ I baked a cake, had her birthday party yesterday.
3. My sister, __________ son is two, works at the hospital.
4. My friend, with __________ I live, wants a cat.
5. The people __________ live there have a boat.
6. That is the lady __________ sculpture I bought.
7. My grandma, __________ is an excellent cook, made dinner.
8. To __________ should I address the letter?
9. The students __________ read the book gave a nice presentation.
10. __________ jacket is on the floor?


Now try to write three sentences, using a different pronoun in each.

1. __________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________

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