

## Grammar Worksheets: Who or Whom?

<http://www.grammar-worksheets.com>

People are so mystified (confused) about the use of who and whom that some of us are tempted to throw our hands in the air and say, "it just doesn't matter." But it does matter. Those who know (and not just English teachers), judge those who misuse it.

Not using who and whom correctly can cost you, not just in school, but also in life. Let's get it down now.

### **Who and Whom are Pronouns**

That's right; who and whom are pronouns. And if you recall, a pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun. Sometimes we use pronouns instead of nouns.

We would not say, "Jesse doesn't like the principal Ms. Thomas was hired at his school." The name Ms. Thomas is a noun. For this sentence to flow, we would write, "Jesse doesn't like the principal who was hired at his school."

### **It All Depends on Case**

In English grammar, we have a term called **case**, which refers to pronouns. The case of a pronoun can be either **subject** or **object**, depending on its use in a sentence. Take a look at this table.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Object</b>
I	me
he	him
she	her
we	us
they	them
who	whom

The pronoun who is used as a subject; whom is used as an object.

**Who used correctly:** Janice is the student who has read the most books.

**Whom used correctly:** Janice is the student whom the teachers picked as outstanding.

### **How Can I Determine Which One to Use?**

Break up the sentence into two parts.

Janice is the student. She (Janice) has read the most books.

Janice is the student. The teachers picked her (Janice) as outstanding.

If you use I, he, she, we, or they, then the correct form is who.

If you use me, him, her, us, or them, then the correct form is whom.

**Rule of thumb:** Generally, if you can omit the who/whom entirely, the correct form is whom. If you need it, then it's who.

Example: Janice is the student the teachers picked as outstanding. (Sentence makes sense without the who/whom structure, so the correct form is whom.)

## So What About Questions?

For questions, turn the question into a statement and follow the suggestion from the previous page.

Example: (Who, Whom) should I invite to the dance?

I should invite – her – to the dance.

When you turn the question into a statement, you use the pronoun her, so whom is correct.

Example: (Who, Whom) is the president of student government?

She is the president of student government.

Again, when you turn the question into a statement, you use she, so who is correct.

## Always Use Whom as the Object of a Preposition

After a preposition (about, above, below, for, in, to, toward, ...) use whom.

Example: I don't know to (who, whom) I should send the package.

The correct form is whom because whom is the object of the preposition to. In 99% of the cases, the correct form after a preposition is whom.

## Exercises: Rewrite each sentence using who and whom correctly.

1. (Who, Whom) did Mom invite to Marcela's birthday party?

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2. Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for (who, whom) the bells tolls; it tolls for thee. (John Donne)

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3. (Who, Whom) invited Richard to be the representative for the entire class?

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4. Susan is the chef (who, whom) will create an exquisite menu for our ten-year reunion.

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