



Community Colleges of Spokane
Spokane Community College
Tutoring Services

Who/Whom

Explanation: The words "who" and "whom" are both pronouns. The difference between the words are a matter of subjects and objects. You use "who" when you are referring to the subject of a clause, and "whom" refers to the object of a clause.

When to use who:

1. "Who" is the subject of the verb (she, he, we). We use "who" to ask which person does an action or which person is a certain way.

Ex: Who forgot to bring the dip?

Ex: Who is standing outside the door?

Ex: Who is sketching that design?

Ex: We all know who pulled that prank.

When to use whom:

2. "Whom" is object of the verb, (her, him, us) and never the subject. We use "whom" to ask which person receives an action.

Ex: Clare saw whom yesterday?

Ex: The elderly woman whom I was asked to take care of was a clever, delightful companion.

Ex: We wondered whom the story was about?

Ex: I saw Clifford, a basketball player whom I had met after the game.

3. *Always* use "whom" after prepositions. (Prepositions are words like to, with, by, on, in, near.)

Ex: **With** *whom* did you see Janelle?

Ex: You sat **by** *whom* all night?

Ex: That is the friend **to** *whom* I lent the book.

- Use this *he/him* method to decide whether *who* or *whom* is correct:

Subjective Pronouns	Objective Pronouns
he = who	him = whom
she = who	her = whom

Examples:

Ex: **Who/Whom** wrote the letter?

He wrote the letter. Therefore, *who* is correct.

Ex: **Who/Whom** wrote *The Age of Innocence*?

She wrote it. Therefore, *who* is correct.

Ex: **Who/Whom** do you support for mayor?

I support *her*. Therefore, *whom* is correct.

Ex: **Who/Whom** did the committee select as their leader?

They selected *him*. Therefore, *whom* is correct.

When not to use **Who/Whom**:

1. Don't use "whom" just to appear sophisticated. The following is an example of the pseudo-sophisticated *whom*.

Ex: ...a woman **whom** I think is a genius. (incorrect)

In this case *whom* is not the object of *I think*. Put *I think* at the end and witness the folly: *a woman whom is a genius, I think*.

Ex: ...a woman **who** I think is a genius. (correct)

2. Don't use "whom" if you are unsure.

Tip: If you are unsure which to use, use **who**. It is much more common than *whom*.

YouTube Links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3aEGrmsZ5c>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJ3ZzOq5JEc>

Online Resources:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/645/01/>

http://www.grammar-monster.com/lessons/who_whom.htm

<http://www.grammarbook.com/grammar/who\whom.asp>

http://www.englishpage.com/miniutorials/who_whom.html