### 8- I[nterrogative Pronouns](https://www.thefreedictionary.com/Interrogative-Pronouns.htm)

**Interrogative pronouns** are used to ask questions, functioning either as **the subject** or **object** of such sentences. There are five primary interrogative pronouns: ***who, whom, whose, which*,** and ***what*.**

## Using interrogative pronouns

### Direct Questions

Most often, interrogative pronouns are used in direct questions, representing the person or thing that is being asked about. In direct questions, the interrogative pronoun usually comes at or near the beginning of the interrogative clause, acting as either the subject or object of the sentence. For example:

* “**Who** is coming to the party tonight?” (subject)
* “So, **which** will you choose, the red dress or the blue one?**”** (object)
* “Could you tell me **whose** these are?” (subject)
* “**Whom** did you ask to fill in for Mrs. Smith?” (object)\*
* **“What** do you expect me to do, exactly?” (object)

An interrogative pronoun is easy to identify because it can stand on its own in a sentence and takes the grammatical function of a noun. Other question words, on the other hand, act as adverbs when they stand alone, as in:

* “**How** did you find me?” (*How* modifies the verb *find*.)
* “**When** are we leaving?” (*When* modifies the verb *leaving*.)
* “**Why** did we stay?” (*Why* modifies the verb *stay*.)

NOTE: ***Whom*** is becoming increasingly rare in modern English. Although it is technically more accurate to use *whom* when it functions as the object of a verb and *who* when it functions as the subject, it is now much more common to use *who* in both cases.)

### Indirect Questions

Interrogative pronouns can also appear within **indirect questions**. When this happens, they appear in the middle of the sentence. Indirect questions are sometimes used to ask something in a more polite way, as in:

* “Could you tell me **whose** these are?”
* “Would you mind telling me **which** I’m supposed to bring?”
* “Do you know **what** we’re doing here?”

Other times, indirect questions are used for emphasis to convey surprise:

* “She wants **who** to come to the party?”
* “You’re going to do **what** in New York City?”

In such cases, emphasis is put on the interrogative pronoun—we can hear the stress on the words when we say the sentences aloud.

### Reported Questions

Interrogative pronouns also appear in the middle of **reported questions**. Reported questions are actually a form of declarative sentences using reported speech (also called **indirect speech**): they tell us *about* something someone else asked, but do not ask a question themselves. As such, they do not end in a question mark. For example:

* “She wants to know **whose** these are.”
* “He wondered **which** is correct.”
* “I asked you **what** we were supposed to do today.”
* “She was wondering **who** would be coming tomorrow.”
* “They asked **whom** to consult in the matter.”

The speaker in each of the examples isn’t asking an actual question, but rather is reporting or clarifying a question that has already been asked.

### Other interrogative pronouns

There are technically seven other interrogative pronouns—*whoever, whomever, whichever, whatever, whatsoever, whosoever*, and *whomsoever*—that are used for emphatic purposes, but they are typically used in more formal or old-fashioned English. For example:

* “**Whoever** would believe such a story?”
* “**Whatever** could I have done to make you so angry?”
* “**Whomever** did you ask to accompany you to the gala on such short notice?”
* “**Whichever** will the gentleman choose, I wonder?

The last three, *whatsoever, whosoever,* and *whomsoever*, are synonymous with *whatever, whoever*, and *whomever*. However, they are considered even more antiquated in modern English. It is uncommon to come across them even in more formal speech or writing.

## Other grammatical roles

Many of the interrogative pronouns we’ve examined above often serve other grammatical functions in different contexts. It’s important to know the difference between them.

### [Interrogative Adjectives](https://www.thefreedictionary.com/Interrogative-Adjectives.htm)

Three of the interrogative pronouns—***whose****,* ***which***, and ***what***—can also function as [**interrogative adjectives**](https://www.thefreedictionary.com/Interrogative-Adjectives.htm), meaning they come before and modify **another noun**. An easy way to be sure whether you are dealing with an interrogative adjective or an interrogative pronoun is to check whether the question word is immediately followed by a noun that it modifies. For example:

* “**What *book*** is your favorite?”

In this example, *what* is immediately followed by the noun *book*, which it is modifying. We can be sure that, in this case, *what* is an interrogative adjective.

* “**What** are you reading?”

In this sentence, *what* is not immediately followed by a noun that it modifies, which means that it is an interrogative pronoun.

Here are some other examples:

* “**Which *shirt*** should I wear?” (interrogative adjective)
* “**Which** would you choose if you were me?” (interrogative pronoun)
* “**Whose *book*** is this on the table?” (interrogative adjective)
* “**Whose** is this that I’m holding?” (interrogative pronoun)

### [Relative Pronouns](https://www.thefreedictionary.com/Relative-Pronouns.htm)

***Who, whom, which****,* and ***whose*** can also be used as [**relative pronouns**](https://www.thefreedictionary.com/Relative-Pronouns.htm) in declarative sentences. They are not considered interrogative in this form, because they are no longer associated with a question; rather, they are used to help clarify whom or what a sentence is talking about, or else give extra information about it. For example:

* “I helped the old man **who** lives down the road with his groceries.”
* “The computer, **which** belonged to my brother, is very slow.”
* “Could the person **whose** car is parked outside please move it?”
* “A man **who/whom** I had never met before greeted me in the street.”

In addition, the pronouns *whoever, whichever,* and *whatever* are also used as [indefinite relative pronouns](https://www.thefreedictionary.com/Indefinite-Pronouns.htm). They are much more commonly used in this way in modern English than they are as interrogative pronouns. For example:

* + “Do **whatever** you please; I don’t care.”
  + “**Whoever** decides to join us is more than welcome.”
  + “Take **whichever** route is fastest.”

### 9- [Reciprocal pronouns](https://www.thefreedictionary.com/Reciprocal-Pronouns.htm)

We use **reciprocal pronouns** when two or more people both act as the subject of a verb, and both (or all) individually and equally receive the verb’s action. They can be the object of either the verb itself or a preposition used to complete the verb’s meaning. So Reciprocal pronouns always function as the objects of verbs, referring back to the two or more people who are or were the subject(s).

There are two reciprocal pronouns—***each other*** (traditionally used for two people) and ***one another*** (traditionally used for more than two people). However, this supposed “rule” is less commonly applied in modern English, with *each other* and *one another* often being used interchangeably.

For example:

* “Jake and I call **each other** every day.”
* “My neighbors and I spent a lot of time at **one another’s** houses when we were kids.”
* “My sister and I always help **each other”**
* **“**We respect **one another** in my family**”**

## *Each other’s* and *One another’s*

When we wish to make reciprocal pronouns possessive, we always treat them as singular and add **“-’s”** to the end. Because both *each other* and *one another* refer to the individuals within a pair or group, they cannot take the plural possessive form (i.e., *each others’X* or *one anothers’X*).

However, because we are talking about things belonging to two or more people, the nouns that follow their possessive form are usually pluralized. For example:

* “My neighbor and I spent a lot of time at **each other’s *houses*** when we were kids.”
* “The students were sent off in pairs to correct **one another’s *assignments***.”

Just remember that [uncountable nouns](https://www.thefreedictionary.com/Uncountable-Nouns.htm) are always singular, as in:

* “Everyone at the rally was bolstered by **each other’s *energy***.”