



WHO, WHOM, WHO'S WHOSE

GRAMMAR LESSON

[YOUTUBE.COM/ENGLISHWITHLUCY](https://www.youtube.com/englishwithlucy)

In this lesson, you're learning about the differences between some words that often cause problems for English learners because of how similar they are. You're going to learn about the words **who** and **whom** and **who's** and **whose**.

WHO AND WHOM

The difference between **who** and **whom** is the same as the difference between **I** and **me**, **he** and **him** and **they** and **them**.

Who is a **subject pronoun**, like **I**.

Whom is an **object pronoun**, like **me**.

WHO

Who is a subject pronoun. Subject pronouns refer to the person doing an action.

Here are a couple of examples:

Who is coming to the party?

Who lives here?

If you want to check if you're using **who** correctly in this sentence, try answering the question with another subject pronoun, like **she**.



Who is coming to the party?

She is coming to the party.

Who lives here?

They live here.

We also use **who** in **indirect questions** as well as the direct questions we saw just now. Here are some examples:

Do you know who is coming with us?

Could you tell me who that woman is?

And, we often use **who** in **relative clauses**. Relative clauses give us more information about a person or thing. In relative clauses, we use relative pronouns to refer to the person or thing. **Who** is a relative pronoun we use to refer to the subject of the clause.

Let's take a look at an example:

My sister, who lives in New York, is a doctor.

Again, just to check, you can isolate the who clause and insert she.

She lives in New York.

Yep, that's grammatically fine, so who is correct!

Here's another example:

She's the teacher who told me I would fail maths! (She told me I would fail maths!)

Who is also used in **reported speech**.

She told me who was coming.



They asked me who was arriving first.

Lucy has a video about reported speech - if you want to learn more about it, [click here!](#)

WHOM

Whom is an **object pronoun**. Object pronouns receive the action of the sentence. Let's look at an example of a sentence with an object pronoun.

She went to the park with him.

Him is the object pronoun.

If you didn't know who her companion was, you could ask a question using **whom**.

Whom did she go to the park with?

Here's another example of a question with whom:

Whom would you prefer to have as a manager?

How can you check if this is correct?

By answering the question with a different object pronoun; in this case, we'll use **her**.

I would prefer to have her as a manager.

You can't say, I would prefer to have she as a manager, so that means **who is incorrect**.



In real-life conversations, native English speakers don't use the word **whom** very often at all. It's seen as overly formal and old-fashioned, so you're much more likely to hear people say:

Who would you prefer to have as a manager?

We should always use **whom** with a preposition. For example:

Whom did you give that present to? or **To whom did you give that present?**

Whom are you cooking dinner for? or **For whom are you cooking dinner?**

The second version of the questions, with the preposition at the beginning of the sentence, is grammatically the more correct. But, most native English speakers wouldn't ask a question like this in normal conversation and they would simply say:

Who did you give that present to?

Who are you cooking dinner for?

We can also use **whom** in relative clauses when we are referring to the object of the clause. For example:

Julio, whom we met on the plane, is from Spain.

Whom is the object of **met**; **We met Julio** or **We met him.**



If the relative clause includes a preposition, we use **whom**.

Tanya is the woman from whom I received a letter.

Again, many native speakers would use **who** in these sentences, not **whom**.

WHO AND WHOM

Here are some more examples of **who** and **whom** together.

Who made this delicious chocolate cake?

He made this delicious chocolate cake.

Whom are you going to Greece with?

I am going to Greece with him.

Here are a couple more examples in relative clauses:

She has a daughter who is a pilot.

Her daughter, to whom she is very close, is a pilot.

WHO'S AND WHOSE

Who's and **whose** are versions of the word **who**. **Who's** is a contraction of **who is** or **who has**. **Whose** is a possessive pronoun, like **my** or **his**.

Who's and **whose** are pronounced exactly the same way, but as you can see, they are spelt differently. This makes them what we call homonyms or, more precisely, homophones.



WHO'S

Who's is a contraction of two words: **who + is** or **who + has**. You can tell from the context of the sentence whether it's **is** or **has**.

Who's that man sitting in the corner?
(who is)

Who's been to Paris before? (who has)

We often use **who's** in questions like in the examples above, but we can also use it in sentences.

That's the lecturer **who's** giving a talk later. (who is)

She's the person **who's** been sending me all those letters! (who has)

WHOSE

Whose is most often used in questions when we want to know to whom an object belongs (a bonus example of whom!). Take a look at these examples with **whose**:

Whose dog is that?

Whose cupcakes are these?

You could answer both of these questions with the possessive pronoun **my**.

That is my dog and **those are my** cupcakes!



We use whose in sentences too,
including in relative clauses:

This is my son, whose huge shoes you
tripped over in the hallway.

The woman whose bike was stolen is
very angry.



Activity

Choose the correct word to complete the sentence.

1. _____ football boots are these? They're so muddy!
a. Who b. Whose c. Who's d. Whom
2. _____ wants to come and watch our daughter play the piano in a school concert tomorrow?
a. Whom b. Whose c. Who d. Who's
3. _____ already finished their homework? Ah, John has finished, excellent!
a. Who's b. Whose c. Who d. Whom
4. To _____ it may concern, I am writing to apply for the job you advertised.
a. who b. whom c. whose d. who's
5. _____ looking forward to the weekend?
a. Whom b. Who c. Whose d. Who's
6. I told the man _____ dog escaped that he should keep it on a lead.
a. whose b. who's c. whom d. who
7. Students _____ come late won't understand the lesson properly.
a. whom b. who's c. whose d. who
8. The man _____ I met at the bus stop turned out to be a taxi driver whose car had broken down!
a. who b. whose c. whom d. who's
9. You'll never guess _____ called me yesterday!
a. whom b. who c. who's d. whose
10. _____ older, your grandma or your grandpa?
Whose b. Who c. Whom d. Who's

Answers
1. whose 2. who 3. who's 4. whom 5. who's 6. whose 7. who 8. whom 9. who 10. who's