

RELATIVE PRONOUNS

Relative pronouns follow nouns and either (1) make clear who or what you are talking about, or (2) provide additional information about the noun.

Examples

(1) I need to find someone **who** can pick up my dry cleaning.

(2) Sushi, **which** can be very expensive in restaurants, is actually easy to make at home.

who: refers to a person (as the verb's subject)

whom: refers to a person (as the verb's object)

which: refers to an animal or thing

what: refers to a non-living thing

that: refers to a person, animal, or thing

Who vs. Whom

Who or *whoever* is always the subject of a verb. Use *who* or *whoever* when the pronoun performs the action indicated by the verb.

- *Who* won the marathon last Tuesday?
- I wonder *who* came up with that terrible idea!

On the other hand, *whom* and *whomever* serve as objects. They are used when the pronoun does *not* perform an action. Use *whom* or *whomever* when the pronoun is the direct object of a verb or the object of a preposition.

- *Whom* did Frank marry the third time? (direct object of verb)
- From *whom* did you buy that old record player? (object of preposition)

Tip: When deciding whether to use *who* or *whom*, try this trick. Reorder the sentence in your head, using either *he* or *him* in place of *who* or *whom*.

Original	Reordered sentence
<i>Who/Whom</i> do I consider my best friend?	I consider <i>him</i> my best friend. I consider <i>he</i> my best friend.

Which reordered sentence sounds better? The first one, of course. So the trick is, if you can use *him*, you should use *whom*. If you can use *he*, you should use *who*.

Exercise

Complete the following sentences by adding *who* or *whom*.

1. _____ hit the home run?
2. I remember _____ won the Academy Award for Best Actor last year.
3. To _____ is the letter addressed?
4. I have no idea _____ left the iron on, but I am going to find out.
5. _____ are you going to recommend for the internship?
6. With _____ are you going to Hawaii?
7. No one knew _____ the famous actor was.
8. _____ in the office knows how to fix the copy machine?
9. From _____ did you get the concert tickets?
10. No one knew _____ ate the cake mom was saving.

Adapted from *Writing for Success* (2015)



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