



Who or Whom?

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How do you choose between the various forms of the pronoun **who**? (who, whose, whom, whoever, whomever)

The **number** (singular or plural) of the pronoun (and its verbs) is determined by what the pronoun **refers** to. It can refer to a singular person or a group of people.

Example: The person **who** wrote the book will be ready to autograph it.

Example: The people **who** have bought the book should receive the first autographs.

The forms of **he** and **they** are similar to the forms of **who**. Look at the chart below.

	Subject	Possessive	Object
Singular	he	his	him
	who	whose	whom
Plural	they	their	them
	who	whose	whom

To choose correctly among the forms of **who**, re-phrase the sentence so you choose between **he** and **him**.

Example: If you want **him**, write **whom**; if you want **he**, write **who**.

Who do you think is responsible? (Do you think **he** is responsible?)

Whom shall we ask to the party? (Shall we ask **him** to the party?)

Give the book to **whomever** you please. (Give the book to **him**.)

Give the book to **whoever** seems to want it most. ("**He** seems to want it most.")

Whoever shows up first will win the prize. (**He** shows up first.)

The problem most writers have with **whose** is confusing it with **who's** which is really a contraction for **who is** or **who has**. In the same way that we should not confuse his with he's (the contraction for he is or he has), we should not confuse **whose** with **who's**.

Example: **Who's** that standing on the corner?

Whose book is this?

I don't care **whose** book this is. It's brilliant!

Whose can be used to refer to inanimate objects as well as to people.

Example: I remember reading a book **whose** title I can't recall right now.