

Who and Whom

Who and **whom** follow the same basic pronoun rules: *Who* is always the subject of a verb; *whom* is always the object.

In order to decide which to use, make a simple substitution. In any sentence or clause, substitute *he* for *who*, *him* for *whom*. Using the masculine forms is advised because they sound so much like *who* and *whom*. Sometimes you'll have to rewrite the clause containing (following) *who* or *whom* for it to make sense.

Who / whom should I say is calling? Many people mistakenly say, "Whom should I say is calling?"

By rewriting it slightly, you can see it should be *who*. It could be either, "Should I say *he* is calling?" or "I should say *him* is calling." Since *he* fits, you use *who*, the subject of the verb *is calling*. The correct sentence is, "Who should I say is calling?"

Who / whom did you go with? Most of us would use *who*. But by rewriting it slightly, it's easy to see that it has to be *whom*. "Did you go with *he* or *him*?" So the real sentence is, "Whom did you go with?" You could also say/write, "With whom did you go?"

Here's a tough pair:

You may vote for whoever / whomever you wish.

You may vote for whoever / whomever you think is the better candidate.

The first sentence requires *whomever*: You wish to vote for *him*.

The second sentence requires *whoever*, even though it looks so similar: You think *he is the better candidate*.

Remember to focus on the clause **following** *who* or *whom*. Otherwise, it's easy to see the preposition *for* in both sentences and think that you use *whom* in both.

Substitute	For
WHO →	HE
WHOM →	HIM
WHOSE →	HIS
WHO'S →	WHO IS