

1 Here's the Idea

▶ **The case of the pronoun *who* is determined by the pronoun's function in a sentence.**

Here are the nominative, objective, and possessive forms of *who* and *whoever*.

Forms of <i>Who</i> and <i>Whoever</i>	
Nominative	who, whoever
Objective	whom, whomever
Possessive	whose, whosever

Who and *whom* can be used to ask questions and to introduce subordinate clauses.

Who and Whom in Questions

In a question, the nominative pronoun *who* is used as a subject or as a predicate pronoun.

Who discovered radium?

↑ SUBJECT

The scientist was *who*?

↑ PREDICATE PRONOUN

In a question, the objective pronoun *whom* is used as a direct object, an indirect object, or the object of a preposition.

Whom did Marie Curie marry?

↑ DIRECT OBJECT

With *whom* did she work?

↑ OBJECT OF PREPOSITION

Here's How Choosing *Who* or *Whom* in a Question

To (*who*, *whom*) were the findings given?

1. Rewrite the question as a statement.

The findings were given to (*who*, *whom*).

2. Figure out whether the pronoun is used as a subject, an object, a predicate pronoun, or the object of a preposition.

The findings were given to *whom*.

(*Whom* is the object of the preposition *to*.)

3. Use the correct form in the original question.

To *whom* were the findings given?

Who and Whom in Subordinate Clauses

When deciding whether to use *who* or *whom* in a subordinate clause, consider only how the pronoun functions within the clause. Use *who* when the pronoun is the subject of the clause.

He's the climber *who* planted the flag.

SUBJECT → SUBORDINATE CLAUSE

Use *whom* when the pronoun is an object in the subordinate clause.

The climber *whom* we all know planted the flag.

DIRECT OBJECT → SUBORDINATE CLAUSE

Here's How Choosing *Who* or *Whom* in a Clause

Eileen Collins is an astronaut (*who, whom*) I admire.

1. Identify the subordinate clause in the sentence.

(*who, whom*) I admire

2. Determine how the pronoun is used in the clause. Is it a subject or an object? You may have to rearrange the clause to figure this out.

I admire (*who, whom*)

The pronoun is a direct object, so the correct form is *whom*.

I admire *whom*

3. Use the correct pronoun in the sentence.

Eileen Collins is an astronaut *whom* I admire.

Don't assume that you should use *whomever* after a preposition. Choose *whoever* or *whomever* based on the pronoun's function in the subordinate clause.

Share your discovery with (*whoever, whomever*) is interested.

Share your discovery with *whoever* is interested.

SUBJECT → SUBORDINATE CLAUSE