

LUC WRITING CENTER – “WHO VS. WHOM”

When should you use “who,” and when should you use “whom” in your writing?

The Rule: Who” and “whom” are interrogative pronouns. This means **they take the place of a noun in a question.** The official rule is that “who” is used in **the subject position in the sentence**, while “whom” is used in **the object position of the sentence.**

If this sounds confusing, remember this simple rule: *use “who” where you would use “he” and “whom” where you would use “him” or “her.”* This will make the rule more evident to your ear as you read your sentence to yourself.

Examples:

Notice the *connection* between “who” and “he” or “she” and between “whom” and “him” or “her” in the following sentences.

Who gave you the ball?

He gave you the ball.

He gave the ball to **whom**?

He gave the ball to **her**.

Most of the time, *the subject is at the beginning of the sentence and the object is at the end.* But that is not always the case. Take, for example, the following sentences:

To **whom** did you give the ball?

To **him** I gave the ball.

These sentences may sound a bit unusual, but they are grammatically correct. *That’s why the surest guide is to remember to use “who” where you would use “he” and “whom” where you would use “him.”* Try out the following exercises to make sure you’ve learned this concept.

Given the discussion on the front side of this page, decide whether to replace the bold word or words with “who” or “whom” in the following sentences:

1. **He** gave you the picture frame?
2. You took it from **him**?
3. **You** took it from him?
4. **She** met you at the coffee shop?
5. She arrived with **him**?
6. **She** arrived with him?
7. Why don’t you ride with **Charles**?
8. **Sandra** says you should go?
9. To **the victor** go the spoils?
10. For **what person** was this report made?

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Answers:

1. Who
2. Whom
3. Who
4. Who
5. Whom
6. Who
7. Whom
8. Who
9. Whom
10. Whom