



Palm Beach Atlantic University  
Center for Writing Excellence

## PROPER USE OF WHO AND WHOM

When deciding whether to use who or whom, one must ask if the case is **subjective** or **objective**.

Subjective	Objective
Who	Whom
Whoever	Whomever

\***Who** can be replaced by **he** (subjective) and **whom** can be replaced by **him** (objective).

A subjective case pronoun is *always* the subject of the sentence or the predicate noun renaming the subject. An objective case pronoun is *always* the object of the prepositional phrase, indirect object, or direct object.

### Examples:

- The library is open to whomever wants to use it.

*Whomever is in the objective case because it functions as the indirect object of the sentence. (Replacing “the library is open to whomever” with “the library is open to him” makes sense.)*

- The librarian was not who she had expected.

*Who is in the subjective case because it functions as the predicate noun renaming the subject.*

- Who do you think ate the cookies?

*Who is in the subjective case because it functions as the subject of the sentence.*

- To whom are you speaking?

*Whom is in the objective case because it is the object of a preposition.*

(Replacing “to whom” with “to him” makes sense.)