

Using *Who* and *Whom*

People sometimes confuse the pronouns *who* and *whom* when they write. *Who* is a subject form. It is used as a subject of a sentence or clause.

Who made this mess?

I saw a performer *who* could do four back flips. [*Who* is the subject in the dependent clause *who could do four back flips.*]

Whom is an object form. It is used as the object of a preposition or as a direct object.

To *whom* did you send a letter?

Whom will you ask?

In the first example, *whom* is the object of the preposition *to*. In the second example, *whom* is a direct object.

- The subject (*you*) does not come first in a question. Don't be fooled if the subject does not come first.
- To understand why *Whom* is used in the second sentence, change the word order so that the subject comes first. (*Whom* will you ask? becomes *You will ask whom?*) This makes it easier to see that *whom* is a direct object.

Directions How is the underlined word used? Write *subject*, *object of preposition*, or *direct object*.

1. Who asked for athletic tape? subject
2. That is the gymnast with whom I study. object of preposition
3. He is an athlete who once tried out for the Olympic team. subject
4. Whom have you told? direct object
5. I told my cousin, who is only eleven. subject

Directions Underline *who* or *whom* to complete each sentence correctly.

6. (Who, Whom) is your favorite athlete?
7. I disagree with Alan, (who, whom) likes basketball players.
8. About (who, whom) is that article written?
9. (Who, Whom) did you choose?
10. I chose Tiger Woods, a golfer for (who, whom) I have great respect.
11. Have you heard of Arthur Ashe, a tennis player (who, whom) died of cancer?
12. He was a tennis champion (who, whom) the public greatly admired for his style.