

For many years, the actors Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee entertained [1] (*we, us*) fans of movies and television with their talented performances. My friend Elvin and [2] (*me, I*) really admire both of [3] (*they, them*). Did you know that [4] (*they, them*) were married for fifty-six years? When Davis worked on Broadway, [5] (*he, him*) wrote and starred in *Purlie Victorious*, and critics gave [6] (*he, him*) great reviews. In addition, [7] (*him, he*) appeared on the TV show *Evening Shade*. One of the stars of the movie *The Jackie Robinson Story* was [8] (*she, her*). What Elvin and [9] (*me, I*) admire most about Davis and Dee is that [10] (*them, they*) were fine performers who actively supported civil rights and other humanitarian causes.

Special Pronoun Problems

Who and Whom

Nominative Case		Objective Case	
who	whoever	whom	whomever

7h. The use of *who* or *whom* in a subordinate clause depends on how the pronoun functions in the clause.

When you are choosing between *who* or *whom* in a subordinate clause, follow these steps:

- STEP 1** Find the subordinate clause.
- STEP 2** Decide how the pronoun is used in the clause—as a subject, a predicate nominative, a direct or indirect object, or an object of a preposition.
- STEP 3** Determine the case of the pronoun according to the rules of formal standard English.
- STEP 4** Select the correct form of the pronoun.

EXAMPLE Do you know (*who, whom*) she is?

- STEP 1** The subordinate clause is (*who, whom*) *she is*.
- STEP 2** The pronoun (*who, whom*) is the predicate nominative: *she is who*.
- STEP 3** As a predicate nominative, the pronoun is in the nominative case.
- STEP 4** The nominative form is *who*.

ANSWER Do you know **who** she is?

Think as a Reader/Writer

In informal English, the use of *whom* is becoming less common. In informal situations, you may correctly begin any question with *who* regardless of the grammar of the sentence. In formal English, however, you should distinguish between *who* and *whom*.

Think as a Reader/Writer

Frequently, *whom* in subordinate clauses is omitted in informal situations, but its use is understood.

EXAMPLE

The people (*whom*) you imitate are your role models.

In formal situations, it is generally better to include *whom*.

SKILLS FOCUS

Use case forms of personal pronouns correctly.

TIPS & TRICKS

If you are not sure whether to use *who* or *whom* in a sentence, try the following test. Omit everything but the subordinate clause; then, substitute a nominative case pronoun such as *he*, *she*, or *they* for *who* or substitute an objective case pronoun such as *him*, *her*, or *them* for *whom*. If the nominative case pronoun is correct, use *who*. If the objective case pronoun is correct, use *whom*.

EXAMPLE

The coach will help anyone (*who*, *whom*) tries hard. [*He tries hard or Him tries hard? He tries hard is correct.*]

The coach will help anyone **who** tries hard.

In the example on the previous page, the entire clause *who she is* is used as a direct object of the verb *do know*. However, the way the pronoun is used within the clause—as a predicate nominative—is what determines the correct case form.

EXAMPLE Susan B. Anthony, about (*who*, *whom*) Sam reported, championed women's right to vote.

STEP 1 The subordinate clause is *about (who, whom) Sam reported*.

STEP 2 The subject is *Sam*, and the verb is *reported*. The pronoun is the object of the preposition *about*: *Sam reported about (who, whom)*.

STEP 3 The objective of a preposition is in the objective case.

STEP 4 The objective form is *whom*.

ANSWER Susan B. Anthony, about **whom** Sam reported, championed women's right to vote.

Oral Practice 5 Using the Pronouns *Who* and *Whom* in Subordinate Clauses

Read each of the following sentences aloud, stressing the italicized pronouns.

1. Take this book to Eric, *whom* you met yesterday.
2. Mr. Cohen is the man *who* lives next door to us.
3. Can you tell me *who* they are?
4. Toni Morrison is an author *whom* many readers admire.
5. *Whom* Mona finally voted for is a secret.
6. The coach will penalize anyone *who* misses the bus.
7. *Whoever* wins the race will get a prize.
8. The woman to *whom* I was speaking is conducting a survey of people who ride the bus.

Exercise 5 Classifying Pronouns Used in Subordinate Clauses and Identifying Correct Forms

For each of the following sentences, choose the correct pronoun in parentheses. Then, give its use in the sentence—as a *subject*, *predicate nominative*, *direct object*, *indirect object*, or *object of a preposition*.

EXAMPLE 1. I know (*who*, *whom*) you are.

1. *who*—predicate nominative

1. Mrs. James, (*who*, *whom*) I work for, owns a pet shop in the mall and a feed store in our town.

2. Is there anyone here (*who, whom*) needs a bus pass?
3. She is the only one (*who, whom*) everybody trusts.
4. Both of the women (*who, whom*) ran for seats on the city council were elected.
5. I helped Mr. Thompson, (*who, whom*) was painting his garage and shingling his porch roof.
6. Eileen couldn't guess (*who, whom*) the secret agent was.
7. It was Octavio Paz (*who, whom*) won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1990.
8. Her grandmother, to (*who, whom*) she sent the flowers, won the over-fifty division of the marathon.
9. The person (*who, whom*) you gave the daisies is none other than my long-lost twin!
10. Shirley Chisholm, (*who, whom*) we are studying in history class, was the first African American woman elected to Congress.

Appositives

7i. A pronoun used as an appositive is in the same case as the word to which it refers.

An **appositive** is a noun or pronoun placed next to another noun or pronoun to identify or describe it.

EXAMPLES The winners—**he, she,** and **I**—thanked the committee. [The pronouns are in the nominative case because they are used as appositives of the subject, *winners*.]

The teacher introduced the speakers, Laura and **me**. [The pronoun is in the objective case because it is used as an appositive of the direct object, *speakers*.]

NOTE Sometimes a pronoun is followed by an appositive that identifies or describes the pronoun. The case of the pronoun is not affected by the appositive.

EXAMPLES **We** soloists will rehearse next week. [The pronoun is in the nominative case because it is the subject of the sentence. The appositive *soloists* identifies *We*.]

Give **us** girls a turn to bat. [The pronoun is in the objective case because it is the indirect object of the verb *Give*. The appositive *girls* identifies *us*.]

Reference Note

For more about **appositives**, see page 135.

TIPS & TRICKS

To determine the correct form for a pronoun used with an appositive or as an appositive, read the sentence with only the pronoun.

EXAMPLE

(*We, Us*) scouts offered to help. [*We offered to help* or *Us offered to help*? *We offered to help* is correct.]

We scouts offered to help.

SKILLS FOCUS

Use case forms of personal pronouns correctly.