

Interrogative pronouns

The relative pronouns (e.g. who, which, what, whom, whose etc.) which are used to ask questions are called interrogative pronouns.

The interrogative pronouns may be used to ask:

Direct questions

Who are you?

What do you want?

Whom did you go with?

Whose is this?

Which is your pen?

Indirect questions

I don't know what she wants.

Tell me whom you want to meet.

Do you know whose coat this is?

The interrogative pronouns may be used in the nominative (subject), accusative (object) or possessive cases.

Who did this? (Nominative)

Whose is this pen? (Possessive)

Whom do you want to meet? (Accusative)

What is your name? (Nominative)

What are you looking at? (Accusative) (Here the interrogative what is the object of the preposition at. A pronoun used as the object of a preposition should be in its accusative case.)

From the above examples it is clear that:

Who has whose as its possessive case and whom as its accusative case irrespective of the gender.

Interrogative pronouns

What and which are used as they are in different cases.

What and which do not have a possessive form.

Whatever, whichever, whoever etc

These words are examples of compound interrogative pronouns. A compound interrogative pronoun can be the subject or object of the verb in the other clause.

Whoever told you that was lying.

You can marry whoever you like.

He will eat whatever he is given.

Whichever runner comes first will get a prize.