A SMALL WORD WITH A BIG JOB

Relative Pronouns

From English who and whom to Latin quī, quae, quod

What is a relative pronoun?

A relative pronoun joins information to a noun. In English the chief relative pronouns are who, whom, whose and which. They let us combine short sentences and avoid repeating the same noun.

Joining two sentences

The boy was in the garden. The boy was happy.

The boy who was in the garden was happy.

The words **who was in the garden** form a **relative clause**. They add information about **the boy**.

I saw the boy in the garden. The boy was happy.

The boy whom I saw in the garden was happy.

Two parts of the longer sentence

MAIN CLAUSE: The boy was happy. This can stand alone. RELATIVE CLAUSE: who was in the garden / whom I saw in the garden. This depends on the main clause and describes “the boy”.

The antecedent

The noun described by a relative pronoun is called its **antecedent**. In both examples above, **boy** is the antecedent of who or whom.

Name: _____

1. Who or whom in English?

English has subject forms and object forms. The difference between **who** and **whom** is the same kind of difference as he/him or they/them.

Subject forms	Object forms
I	me
he	him
she	her
we	us
they	them
who	**whom**

The he/him test

Use WHO when HE fits

Who was in the garden? He was in the garden. "Who" is doing the action, so it is the subject.

Use WHOM when HIM fits

Whom did I see? I saw him. "Whom" receives the action, so it is the object.

The boy who carried the book was happy.

HE carried the book. Therefore use WHO.

The boy whom the master praised was happy.

The master praised HIM. Therefore use WHOM.

After a preposition

Formal English also uses **whom** after prepositions: **to whom, with whom, from whom, for whom**

Modern English note

In ordinary speech many people say "the boy who I saw". That is common English. For learning Latin, however, the who/whom distinction is extremely useful because Latin always shows the pronoun's case.

Name: _____

Practice A — Who or whom?

Write who or whom. Then use the he/him test to explain your choice.

1. The boy _____ was singing had a book.

2. The girl _____ we saw was happy.

3. The master _____ praised the slave was angry.

4. The soldier _____ the queen praised was brave.

5. The sailors with _____ we walked were tired.

6. The goddess to _____ we sang was happy.

7. The boys _____ carried the gifts were happy.

8. The friend from _____ I received the book was kind.

2. The bridge to Latin

The golden rule

A Latin relative pronoun takes its GENDER and NUMBER from its antecedent, but it takes its CASE from the job it does inside its own relative clause.

Ask two separate questions:

1. Which noun does the pronoun describe? This gives gender and number.
2. What job does the pronoun do inside the relative clause? This gives case.

The boy whom I saw was happy.

puer, quem vīdī, laetus erat.

puer makes the pronoun masculine singular; "I saw him" makes the pronoun accusative. Therefore: quem.

Do not copy the antecedent's case

The antecedent and the relative pronoun can have different cases. In puer, quem vīdī, puer is nominative in the main clause, but quem is accusative in the relative clause.

Name: _____

3. The complete relative-pronoun table

Learn this as one family: **quī, quae, quod** = who, whom, which, that.

Case	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
SINGULAR			
Nominative	quī	quae	quod
Accusative	quem	quam	quod
Genitive	cuius	cuius	cuius
Dative	cui	cui	cui
Ablative	quō	quā	quō
PLURAL			
Nominative	quī	quae	quae
Accusative	quōs	quās	quae
Genitive	quōrum	quārum	quōrum
Dative	quibus	quibus	quibus
Ablative	quibus	quibus	quibus

The neuter rule

As with neuter nouns, the nominative and accusative forms are the same. Singular: quod. Plural: quae.

A quick meaning guide

Case	Usual English clue
Nominative	who/which does the action
Accusative	whom/which receives the action
Genitive	whose
Dative	to whom / for whom
Ablative	with whom, from whom, by whom, etc.

Name: _____

4. Nominative and accusative relatives

Nominative: the pronoun does the action

Use quī, quae or quod when the relative pronoun is the subject of its own clause.

The boy who is playing in the garden is happy.

puer, quī in hortō lūdit, laetus est.

quī: masculine singular from puer; nominative because he is playing.

The girl who is singing is happy.

puella, quae cantat, laeta est.

quae: feminine singular from puella; nominative because she is singing.

The war which frightens the inhabitants is long.

bellum, quod incolās terret, longum est.

quod: neuter singular from bellum; nominative because it frightens.

Accusative: the pronoun receives the action

Use quem, quam or quod when somebody or something else acts upon the relative pronoun.

The boy whom I saw in the garden is happy.

puer, quem in hortō vīdī, laetus est.

quem: masculine singular from puer; accusative because I saw him.

The girl whom we love is happy.

puella, quam amāmus, laeta est.

quam: feminine singular from puella; accusative because we love her.

The gift which the queen gave was good.

dōnum, quod rēgīna dedit, bonum erat.

quod: neuter singular; accusative because the queen gave it.

The question that prevents mistakes

Who is doing the verb inside the relative clause?

If the relative pronoun is doing it, use nominative. If another word is doing it to the relative pronoun, use accusative.

Name: _____

5. Plural relatives

The soldiers who defend the town are brave.

mīlitēs, quī oppidum dēfendunt, fortēs sunt.

quī: masculine plural and nominative.

The girls whom we saw in the garden are happy.

puellae, quās in hortō vīdimus, laetae sunt.

quās: feminine plural and accusative.

The gifts which the queen gave were good.

dōna, quae rēgīna dedit, bona erant.

quae: neuter plural and accusative.

6. Whose: the genitive

Genitive = whose

The genitive answers “whose?” The singular form cuius is the same for masculine, feminine and neuter; the plural forms are quōrum and quārum.

The master whose slave is tired is angry.

dominus, cuius servus fessus est, īrātus est.

cuius servus = whose slave.

The girl whose mother is sleeping sings.

puella, cuius māter dormit, cantat.

cuius māter = whose mother.

Name: _____

7. To whom: the dative

Dative = to whom / for whom

The dative form cui is singular for every gender. The plural form is quibus.

The boy to whom I gave the book is happy.

puer, cui librum dedī, laetus est.

cui = to whom.

The goddess to whom we sing is happy.

dea, cui cantāmus, laeta est.

cui = to whom.

The boys to whom the queen gave gifts are happy.

puerī, quibus rēgīna dōna dedit, laetī sunt.

quibus = to whom, plural.

Cui or cuius?

Form	Meaning	Example
cui	**to whom**	puer cui librum dedī
cuius	**whose**	puer cuius amīcus cantat

A quick test

If English can sensibly put “to” before the relative word, choose the dative: to whom = cui or quibus.
If English needs “whose”, choose the genitive: cuius, quōrum or quārum.

8. With whom and other ablatives

The ablative relative pronoun normally follows its preposition: **ā quō** (from whom), **prō quā** (for whom). There is one especially important exception.

> **CUM goes on the end**
>
> Say quōcum (with whom, masculine/neuter singular), quācum (with whom, feminine singular), and quibuscum (with whom, plural). Do not write cum quō, cum quā or cum quibus.

The boy with whom I walk is happy.

puer, quōcum ambulō, laetus est.

quōcum: masculine singular from puer; ablative after cum.

The girl with whom we sing is happy.

puella, quācum cantāmus, laeta est.

quācum: feminine singular from puella.

The soldiers with whom we fight are brave.

mīlitēs, quibuscum pugnāmus, fortēs sunt.

quibuscum: masculine plural.

The friend from whom I received the book is happy.

amīcus, ā quō librum accēpī, laetus est.

ā quō = from whom.

The five-step method

1. Find the antecedent: which noun is being described?
2. Copy only its gender and number.
3. Look inside the relative clause.
4. Decide the pronoun's job and therefore its case.
5. Choose the one form that matches all three facts.

> **Worked choice: PUER, ___ VĪDĪ**
>
> Antecedent puer → masculine singular. In the relative clause, "I saw him" → object → accusative. Masculine singular accusative = quem.

Practice B — Find the job

Underline the antecedent. Circle the relative pronoun. Write its gender, number and case.

1. puer, quī in hortō lūdit, laetus est.

2. puella, quam amāmus, laeta est.

3. bellum, quod incolās terret, longum est.

4. mīlitēs, quōs rēx laudat, fortēs sunt.

5. dominus, cuius servus dormit, īrātus est.

6. dea, cui cantāmus, laeta est.

7. puellae, quibuscum ambulāmus, laetae sunt.

8. dōna, quae rēgīna dedit, bona sunt.

Practice C — Choose the correct form

Choose the correct relative pronoun from the brackets.

1. puer, _____ in hortō lūdit, laetus est. (quī / quem)

2. puella, _____ vīdī, cantat. (quae / quam)

3. dōnum, _____ rēgīna dedit, bonum est. (quod / quem)

4. mīlitēs, _____ oppidum dēfendunt, fortēs sunt. (quī / quōs)

5. puellae, _____ in hortō vīdimus, laetae sunt. (quae / quās)

6. dominus, _____ servus fessus est, īrātus est. (cui / cuius)

7. dea, _____ cantāmus, laeta est. (cui / quam)

8. puer, _____ ambulō, laetus est. (quōcum / quem)

Name: _____

Practice D — Translate into English

Translate the whole sentence. Keep the relative clause attached to the correct noun.

1. dominus, quī in templō est, īrātus est.

2. puella, quae in agrō cantat, laeta est.

3. bellum, quod incolās terret, longum est.

4. puer, quem magister monet, fessus est.

5. puella, quam in hortō vīdī, cantat.

6. mīlitēs, quōs rēx laudat, fortēs sunt.

7. dōna, quae rēgīna dedit, bona sunt.

8. dominus, cuius servus dormit, īrātus est.

9. puella, cuius māter cantat, laeta est.

10. puer, cui librum dedī, laetus est.

11. dea, cui cantāmus, laeta est.

12. amīcus, quōcum ambulō, laetus est.

Name: _____

Practice E — Translate into Latin

Use the Pilgrims' vocabulary. Remember: antecedent gives gender and number; the relative clause gives case.

1. The boy who is playing in the garden is happy.

2. The girl who is singing is happy.

3. The boy whom I saw was tired.

4. The girl whom we love is happy.

5. The soldiers who defend the town are brave.

6. The girls whom we saw in the garden are happy.

7. The gift which the queen gave was good.

8. The master whose slave is tired is angry.

9. The girl whose mother is sleeping is singing.

10. The boy to whom I gave the book is happy.

11. The goddess to whom we sing is happy.

12. The friend with whom I walk is happy.

Name: _____

Practice F — Mixed challenge

These combine more than one decision. Work slowly and show the three facts beside each answer: gender, number, case.

1. The soldiers whom the king praised were brave.

2. The girls with whom we walk are happy.

3. The queen whose daughter is singing is happy.

4. The town which the soldiers defend is large.

5. The books which the boys read are good.

6. The slave to whom the master gave the gift was happy.

7. The sailors who saw the storm were afraid.

8. The leader whose soldiers defend the town is brave.

Final check

Can you explain all four points?

1. The difference between who and whom. 2. What an antecedent is. 3. Why gender and number come from the antecedent. 4. Why case comes from the pronoun's own job in the relative clause.

One sentence to remember

A relative pronoun COPIES gender and number, but EARNS its own case.

Name: _____