

# Pronouns

## I • Me • Who • Whom

Most personal pronouns have subjective and objective forms to match and clarify the role they play: “**She** [*subjective*] assigned the task to **them** [*objective*].” Below are two pairs of pronouns that can give writers trouble.

### I/Me

Remember that in formal writing, items being compared must be parallel. Mentally replace the first noun being compared with a pronoun. If you would use *he* (the subjective) there, then use it in the second position as well.

- My brother is taller than **I**. (He is taller; *he* is subjective, so *I* is correct.)
  - Please note that this construction treats *than* as a conjunction, rather than a preposition. It’s the traditional way to write this comparison in formal writing. To understand this intuitively, you can imagine the implied word *am*: “My brother is taller than I am.”
  - For informal, plain language writing, it might be more natural to say, “My brother is taller than me.” This treats *than* as a preposition. As always, write to your audience. (Source: [Chicago Manual of Style](#))
- Please send the report to Olivia and **me**. (Send it to her; *her* is objective, so *me* is correct.)

When in doubt, imagine the other names or pronouns aren’t there. Whichever word sounds correct by itself is also correct when other nouns or pronouns are included. It doesn’t always work, but it’s worth a try.

- Our cousins are coming to visit my sister and **me**.
- My cat and I were on camera before the meeting started.

### Who/Whom

*Who/whom* is another tricky one. To figure out which one to use, test sentences with other pronouns, like *he/she/they* or *she/her/them*. If *he* is correct in the test sentence, you need the subjective case and should use *who*. If *him* is correct, you need the objective case and should use *whom*.

- \_\_\_\_ wrote the report?
  - **He** wrote the report.
  - **Who** wrote the report?
- You gave the report to \_\_\_\_?

- You gave the report to **him**.
  - You gave the report to **whom**?
- \_\_\_\_ should I vote for?
  - You should vote for **them**.
  - **Whom** should I vote for? (or For **whom** should I vote?\*)
- Do you know anyone \_\_\_\_ is like me?
  - He is like **you**.
  - Do you know anyone **who** is like me?

\* This construction is formally correct, but it's probably not the best plain-language option.

## Resources

- [CDC Style Guide: Who/Whom](#)
- [NCEH/ATSDR Style Manual](#)
- [Purdue Writing Lab: Pronoun Case](#)
- [Cases of Pronouns: Rules and Examples](#)