In a sentence, *who* is used as a **subject**, as opposed to *whom*, which is the **object** of a verb or preposition.

*Example:* Who is going to Old Main?  
*Example:* With whom are you going to Old Main?

In the first sentence, *who* is the subject, but the second sentence has *whom* as the object of the preposition *with*.

The answers to these practice examples are located at the Rolvaag Writing Desk!

Have more questions? Still don’t understand *who* vs. *whom*? Make an appointment with a writing tutor!

1.) Visit the Writing Desk homepage, or  
stolaf.edu/asc/writing-help/  
2.) Click on the Appointments box  
3.) Sign in with your St. Olaf email, then click an appointment that works with your schedule!

Or just drop on by!

Information retrieved from:  
Basic strategy

So how can you tell when your pronoun is the object of a verb or preposition? Here’s a trick:

Try substituting he/she/they and him/her/them. If he/she/they fits, use who. If him/her/them fits, use whom.

Just remember: who is the subject, whom is the object

For example, try using the he/she/they trick using this sentence:

Example: Who/whom wants to go to the Cage?

Try substituting “she” and “her”:

Example: She wants to go to the Cage.
Example: Her wants to go to the Cage.

Because the first sentence is correct (“she” makes the sentence grammatically correct), it is the subject of the sentence. Therefore, you should use the word who.

Who wants to go to the Cage?

To ask a question using who or whom, first identify the subject or object of a sentence. Try using this sentence to ask a question:

Example: St. Olaf students take Northfield Lines from the airport back to campus.

If “St. Olaf students” are the subject of your question, use who, but if they are the object of a preposition, use whom.

Who takes Northfield Lines?
By whom are Northfield Lines taken?

For some practice, try picking the correct version of who/whom for these sentences:

Religion 121 was canceled tomorrow by who/whom?
Who/whom is going for a walk in the Natural Lands?
With who/whom are you studying abroad for interim?

Now try making your own sentences using these rules!