



Video 2 – Real Grammar: *who* or *whom*?

"Should I use *who* or *whom*?"

This is a question English language learners often ask themselves.

For example, let's imagine that one of your classmates is having a party tomorrow night and you want to know which of your friends have been invited. So what do you ask?

Who did you invite to your party?

or

Whom did you invite to your party?

According to traditional grammar, there's only one correct answer.

You should use "whom" here, because the people going to the party are the *object* of the verb "invite", and "whom" is the object form of "who".

But the evidence of language in use shows that the way we use "who" and "whom" has changed over the years, so in many cases the traditional rule no longer applies.

When we look at our corpus which shows us how people use English all around the world, we find that "whom" is mostly used after a preposition, such as "of" or "with". For example in this sentence: "There are 25 students in my class, 14 *of whom* are boys".

But "whom" is *almost never* used at the beginning of a sentence.

Asking a question like "whom did you invite" or "whom shall I tell about this?" sounds rather silly and pedantic in most situations - and especially in an informal context like this one.

So, both versions are correct, but it would be much more natural to ask "Who did you invite...?"

If you'd like to know more about this topic or other real grammar questions, have a look at the Macmillan Dictionary Blog.