WHO, WHOM, WHOSE: INTERROGATIVE AND RELATIVE PRONOUNS

Who, whom, and whose function as interrogative pronouns and relative pronouns. Like personal pronouns, interrogative and relative pronouns change form according to how they function in a question or in a clause. (See handout on Personal Pronouns).

Forms/Cases
Who = nominative form; functions as subject
Whom = objective form; functions as object
Whose = possessive form; indicates ownership

As Interrogative Pronouns
They are used to introduce a question.

e.g., Who is on first base? Who = subject, nominative form
     Whom did you call? Whom = object, objective form
     Whose foot is on first base? Whose = possessive, possessive form

As Relative Pronouns
They are used to introduce a dependent clause that refers to a noun or personal pronoun in the main clause.

e.g., You will meet the teacher who will share an office with you.
      "Who is the subject of the clause and relates to teacher. (...she will share an office…)

      The student chose the TA who she knew would help her the most.
      Who is the subject of the clause and relates to TA. (...she knew he would help her)

      You will see the advisor whom you met last week.
      Whom is the object of the clause and relates to advisor (...you met him…)

      You will meet the student whose favorite class is Business Communication.
      Whose indicates ownership or possession and relates to student.
      NOTE: Do not use who’s, the contraction for who is, for the possessive whose.

• How to Troubleshoot
In your mind, substitute a she or her, or a he or him, for the who or the whom.

e.g., The student chose the TA who [she knew] would help her the most (...he would help her the most).

e.g., You will see the advisor whom you met last week. (you met him (objective form), not he (nominative form).