

- When the clause is the subject of the sentence: *Whether the car will be ready depends on the mechanic.* (The clause is the subject of *depends*.)

But when a *whether* clause modifies a verb, *or not* is needed: *They will play tomorrow whether or not it rains.* (The clause modifies *play*.)

Some sentences require a choice between *whether* and *if*. Often both are correct: *Leslie wonders whether (or if) she should take algebra.* But when the sentence explicitly describes a choice, *whether* is preferred: *Toby wonders whether she should take chemistry or physics.* (The clue is *or*.) Sometimes an *if* sentence, although correct, is ambiguous while *whether* would be unmistakable. *Tell Leslie if she should take algebra* could mean talk to her regardless of your recommendation. But it could also mean *If Leslie should take algebra, tell her*—that is, talk to her only if your recommendation is yes.

**which, that.** In introducing clauses, the words are not interchangeable. See **THAT, WHICH, WHIMSIES.**

**whip** (legislative title). Lowercase: *Merrill J. Lam, the Republican whip in the House.*

**whiskey(s).** The general term covers bourbon, rye, Scotch and other liquors distilled from a mash of grain. For consistency, use this spelling even for liquors (typically Scotch) labeled *whisky*. Also see **ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES.**

**white.** Lowercase this racial designation and all others derived from skin color (*black, brown, yellow, red*). Use racial designations only when they are pertinent and their pertinence is clear to the reader.

**white(-).** Most but not all compounds formed with *white* are hyphenated: whitecap, white-collar (adj.), white-faced, whitefish, white-haired, white-hot, white paper, white room, white sale, white sauce, white-shoe (adj.), whitewall, whitewash.

**wholehearted.**

**W.H.O.** for the World Health Organization.

**who, whom.** Many dictionaries have relaxed the distinction between these words, abandoning *whom* unless it directly follows a preposition. But in deference to a grammar-conscious readership and a large classroom circulation, *The Times* observes the traditional standard:

Use *who* in the sense of *he, she* or *they*: *Pat L. Milori, who was appointed to fill the vacancy, resigned.* (He or she was appointed.) Use *whom* in the sense of *him, her* or *them*: *Pat L. Milori, whom the board recommended, finally got the job.* (The board recommended her or him.) The same test applies to *whoever* and *whomever*: *Whoever wins will collect \$64.* (He or she wins.) *Whomever you ask will provide directions.* (You ask her or him.)

Sometimes *whoever* or *whomever* will occur, confusingly, in a clause that is part of a larger sentence. In that case, disregard the overall sentence, and choose

the pronoun according to its function inside the clause: *Give the book to whoever answers the door.* (*He or she answers.*) *Hand the package to whomever you see first.* (*You see her or him.*)

Do not be distracted by a verb that occurs in a parenthetical phrase between the pronoun and its verb, in a construction like this: *Pat L. Milori, who the police said was the mastermind, was arrested yesterday.* Mentally remove *the police said*, and the need for *who* becomes clear. But in this sentence, *whom* is correct: *Pat L. Milori, whom the police described as the mastermind, was arrested today.* (They described *him* or *her*.)

Occasionally the traditional use of *whom* may sound stilted, especially in large type: *Whom Should They Blame?* Do not simply substitute *who*; instead, rephrase the passage: *Who Gets the Blame?* or *Whose Fault Is It?*

**wide(-), (-)wide.** Compounds with *wide* as a prefix are almost always hyphenated when they precede the nouns they modify (and are two words otherwise): wide-angle, wide-awake, wide-brimmed, wide-eyed, wide-open, wide-screen; widespread.

As a simple adjective or as part of a noun, *wide* is usually a separate word: a wide angle, a wide receiver.

Compounds with *wide* as a suffix are solid: boroughwide, citywide, continentwide, countrywide, industrywide, nationwide, statewide, worldwide. But: *World Wide Web*.

**wide-body** (n. and adj.) for large planes like the DC-10, L-1011, 767, 777, A330 and A340.

**widow, widower.** Identify a woman by her marital status only when it is clear that a man would be identified that way in the same context. And cite marital status only when it is pertinent. *Also see* MEN AND WOMEN and OBITUARIES.

**wife.** Use the word only in ways that *husband* would be used. In particular, avoid *his wife* in contexts that imply an unequal relationship. *See* MEN AND WOMEN.

**Wildlife Conservation Society.** Formerly called the New York Zoological Society, it operates the BRONX ZOO, the CENTRAL PARK ZOO, the PROSPECT PARK ZOO, the QUEENS ZOO and the NEW YORK AQUARIUM, all on city property. It is based at the Bronx Zoo.

**Wilkes-Barre** (in Pennsylvania).

**William Paterson University** (in Wayne, N.J.).

**Williamsburg** for the New York bridge, the Brooklyn neighborhood and the Virginia city (*Colonial Williamsburg*). But: *the Dime Savings Bank of Williamsburgh*.

**wind chill** is a measurement devised by the National Weather Service to describe the combined effects of sustained winds and low air temperatures on exposed skin. It is expressed in degrees Fahrenheit. For example, if the air temperature is minus 20 and the wind speed is 10 miles an hour, the wind chill, according to the Weather