

ENGLISH 3AC · SEMESTER 1

Who's or whose? English 3AC grammar

Learn who's and whose in English 3AC: ask about identity and ownership, use possessive answers, and practise with illustrated examples and answers.

Key points

- Who's is short for who is or who has.
- Whose asks about the owner of something.
- Use are with plural objects: Whose books are these?

Learning goals

- Tell a contraction from a question about ownership.
- Ask whose an object is.
- Answer with a possessive name or pronoun.

What is the difference between who's and whose?

Who's and whose sound the same, but they do different jobs. Who's is a contraction. In Who's your teacher?, it means Who is your teacher? The question asks for a person's identity. Whose asks about ownership: Whose dictionary is this? The question asks who owns the dictionary.

Try writing who is or who has in the gap. If the sentence still makes sense, who's may be correct. If you are asking about an owner, use whose. The apostrophe in who's marks missing letters. It is not a possessive apostrophe.



One bag and two trainers give you different questions: Whose bag is this? Whose trainers are these?

How do you ask and answer a question with whose?

Put whose before the object: Whose pencil is this? Use is for one object and are for more than one: Whose trainers are these? This and these must also match the number of objects.

A clear answer names the owner: It's Nabil's pencil. You can then avoid repeating the noun: It's his. For an object belonging to your sister, say It's my sister's or It's hers. Her needs a noun, as in her pencil; hers can stand alone. Whose is this? is also correct when everyone can see the object.

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WHO'S OR WHOSE?

Choose the question by its meaning, not by its sound.

1 Identity
Who's this? = Who is this?



2 Ownership
Whose bag is this?



3 Owner's answer
It's Nabil's bag. It's his.

Read the examples. Explain the pattern. Make your own sentence.

Choose the question by its meaning, not by its sound.

Can who's mean who has?

Yes. In Who's finished the exercise?, who's means who has. Finished is a past participle. In Who's reading?, who's means who is because reading is an -ing form. For this 3AC lesson, first practise the common question Who's this? and simple ownership questions before adding the present perfect example.

A worked example

A bag left in the classroom

Nabil: Who's at the door? Sami: It's Yassine. Nabil: Whose bag is on the desk? Sami: It's Yassine's bag. It's his.

- Who's at the door? asks who the person is.
- Whose bag...? asks who owns the bag.
- His replaces Yassine's bag in the last sentence.

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MAKE THE WORDS AGREE

The object decides whether you need *is* or *are*.

1 One object
Whose pencil is this?



2 Several objects
Whose pencils are these?



3 A short answer
They're my sister's. They're hers.

Read the examples. Explain the pattern. Make your own sentence.

The object decides whether you need *is* or *are*.

How should I use this English 3AC lesson?

- Try the exercises before reading the answers.
- Explain a correction in your own words.
- Return to the examples when two structures look similar.

Exercises: try before reading the answers

1. Identity

Complete: _____ your new classmate?

2. Ownership

Complete: _____ notebook is this?

3. Expand the contraction

Write *Who's* taken my ruler? without a contraction.

4. Plural agreement

Correct: Whose books is these?

5. A possessive answer

The bicycle belongs to your sister. Answer: Whose bicycle is this?

6. Write a question

Ask who owns the two trainers beside the door.

Answers and explanations

1. Identity

Who's. The full question is Who is your new classmate?

2. Ownership

Whose. The question asks who owns the notebook.

3. Expand the contraction

Who has taken my ruler? Taken follows the auxiliary has.

4. Plural agreement

Whose books are these? Books and these are plural.

5. A possessive answer

It's my sister's bicycle. You can also say It's hers.

6. Write a question

Whose trainers are these? Use whose for ownership and are for plural trainers.

Frequently asked questions

How do I choose between who's and whose in English 3AC?

Use who's if you mean who is or who has. Use whose to ask about the owner: Whose bag is this?

Does whose have an apostrophe?

No. Whose is already the question word for ownership.

Can I use whose without a noun?

Yes. Whose is this? is correct when the object is clear. Whose bag is this? names the object.

Revision resource: follow the units, instructions and pace set by your teacher.

[Read the full lesson and practise on MATHFJIB.](#)