The Proper Use of Which

1. As the first word in a question:

   **Which** movie was playing last week?

   **Which** team won last year’s World Series?

2. As a pronoun to refer back to one single noun or to a whole idea:

   a. Referring to one single word:

      A week ago I bought a cashmere sweater which cost $150.
      (The word *which* is “re-naming” the sweater.)

   b. Referring to a whole idea or phrase:

      In 2005, we took a vacation to Walt Disney World, which helped to bond our family members together.
      (The word *which* is referring to the taking of the family vacation.)

      Notice that in the first two uses of which, the use of the word *in* is not necessary.

3. Used after the word *in*.

   Note: The use of *in* with *which* is correct only if there is a sense of something being contained inside or within something else.

   Illinois is the state *in which* I live. (I live *inside* or within Illinois.)

   The room *in which* we are sitting is hundreds of years old.
   (We are sitting inside/within the room.)

   *Lord of the Rings* is a film *in which* many extras were used.
   (The extras were used inside/within the film.)

   Important: Do not repeat the word *in* after using it with *in which*.

   Wrong: Illinois is the state in which I was born in.
   Correct: Illinois is the state *in which* I was born.
4. Use other prepositions like these in front of the word *which*:

   to which  from which  at which  by which  under which  etc.

   The preposition you use will be determined by the verb in the sentence.

   a. For example, students apply *to* a university.

      Notre Dame is the university *to which* I applied after high school.

   b. Some people like to be known *by* a nickname.

      His real first name was Sylvester, but “Bud” was the nickname *by which* he preferred to be known.

   c. At night, people like to park their cars *under* a lamppost.

      When she got off from work, Mary went into the parking lot and looked for the lamppost *under which* she had parked her car.
Using Which with Other Words

1. My mother did not care for the tiny restaurant ________ ________ we stopped during our vacation.
   (People stop _____ a restaurant to eat.)

2. The movie ________ ________ Gene Siskel was referring was *English Patient*.
   (People refer _____ something.)

3. I really enjoyed the last job ________ ________ I got paid.
   (People get paid _____ doing a job.)

4. The game show contestant selected a door ________ ________ was a new car.
   (The new car was _____ the door.)

5. The tired swimmer saw the distant shore, ________ ________ he quickly swam hoping to find a place to rest.
   (The tired swimmer would swim _____ the shore.)

6. We saw a very funny movie, ________ ________ we went to a restaurant and enjoyed a nice dinner.
   (They had the dinner _____ they had seen the movie.)

7. Bob thought there was something very strange about the building ________ ________ he was looking.
   (Bob was looking _____ the building.)

8. The college ________ ________ Mary applied was in Vermont.
   (People apply _____ a college.)

9. These are the tools ________ ________ my father built the shed.
   (People build things _____ tools.)

10. That mail-order company ________ ________ you ordered those pans is now out of business.
    (People order things _____ a company.)
Quiz on Which and in which

Fill in the following blanks in each sentence with the word which by itself.

1. Last year I bought an expensive sweater ____________ I hardly ever wear.
2. Drug abuse is a problem ____________ does not have an easy solution.
3. California is one state ____________ I never visited.
4. Computer technology is a subject ____________ has become very popular.
5. Income taxes, ____________ no one likes, are very important to our society.

Using the Phrase in which Correctly

Fill in the blanks with the two words in which, but notice that each sentence has the idea of something being INSIDE something else.

1. The room ____________ ____________ we are sitting is over one hundred years old. (We are sitting INSIDE the room.)
2. The top drawer is the one ____________ ____________ I keep my important papers. (Papers are kept INSIDE a drawer.)
3. The car ____________ ____________ we were riding was stopped for speeding. (People ride INSIDE a car.)
4. Mom got out the album ___ ________ our family pictures were kept. (Pictures are kept INSIDE an album.)
5. It was not a pleasant situation ____________ ____________ they found themselves. (People find themselves IN a situation.)
**Quiz on the Use of Which**

1. In the following space, compose two sentences correctly using the word *which* to refer to one specific thing or to a whole concept or an idea:

   a. 

   b. 

2. In the following space, compose two sentences correctly using the phrase *in which*.

   a. 

   b. 

3. Compose one correct sentence for each of the following phrases:

   on which –

   from which –

   under which –
**Quiz on Using Which Correctly**

*Fill in the blanks below with one of the following, whichever is appropriate for the context and whichever makes correct sense. Do not cross out any term after you've used it. Some terms will be used more than once, others not at all.*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>which</th>
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**A Working Definition of Literature**

The word *literature* is a term ________ has been discussed and debated by many people down through the years. It is a word ________ many idea and emotions can be attached.

The term comes from Latin, an ancient language ________ many of our English words come. The first part of the word, *litera*, means a letter, like a, b, or c, a fact ________ gives us many related English words such as *literary* and *literally*.

Returning to the word *literature* itself (__________ this essay is dealing), we can begin by saying that it is something ________ has been written down. The forms ________ this writing takes could be a book, play, story, or poem. ________type of literature is best? That is a question ________ there is much debate. Books became very popular in the early sixteen century, ________ time Gutenberg invented the printing press.

Literature also has several important features ________ qualify it as being “great” literature. A good book, story, or play, ________ the reader finds a meaningful message about life, is said to have an important theme. This idea of a significant theme is one ________ makes a work of literature valuable. Another aspect of literary work is that it has
artistic quality and has withstood the test of time, both ____________) ideas are very important in defining any work of literature.

So, anytime a person reads a book, story, play, or poem, that person is enjoying something __________ has been around for thousands of years and __________ he or she will get many hours of relaxation, entertainment, and even education.