

# Indirect and Direct Objects

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**Subject:** *performs* the action.      **Ella** ve la pelota.

**Object:** receives the action.      Ella ve **la pelota**.

EXAMPLE: I give **Sam** the **chair**.

**SUBJECT:** *I* is the subject pronoun because it *performs* the action of the verb—it gives.

**DIRECT OBJECT:** **What** or **Who**? Which of these objects *received* the action directly? Or in this example, **what** do I give? I give the *chair*. This is the *direct object* because it is what is most directly related to the verb.

**INDIRECT OBJECT:** **To whom** or **for whom** was the action of the verb performed? Or in this example, Whom do I give it to? I gave it to *Sam*, so *Sam* is the *indirect object* here.

Now let's replace each **noun** with a **pronoun**.

I gave **it to him**.

*Him* being the I.O and *it* being the D.O.

*Look at these examples in English and the direct object (what or who)*

1. I bought a book.
2. I kicked it.
3. I gave a gift to my friend.
4. I kissed him.
5. She sees him.
6. I pass my notes to him.
7. John gives a flower to his mother.
8. I will say those words to him.
9. I will buy my girlfriend a necklace.
10. Can I buy you a drink?
11. Can you cook some food for me?
12. Give me the book!
13. Can you hand her this pencil?
14. I will tell him the truth.
15. I will give you this movie.

## Direct Object Pronouns

### What are they?

Just like subject pronouns, we use direct object pronouns to replace a name/noun. Instead of saying:

“Juan gave **Maria** flowers. He gave **Maria** flowers because she got her degree,” we would replace “Maria” with “her”.

“Juan gave **Maria** flowers. He gave **her** flowers because she got her degree.”

We use the following pronouns for the direct object:

Direct Object Pronouns	
<b>me</b>	me
<b>te</b>	you
<b>lo, la</b>	him, her, it
<b>nos</b>	us
<b>os</b>	you all (Spain)
<b>los, las</b>	them, you all

## Where are they placed in a sentence?

The pronoun will come right before a conjugated verb.

Yo **lo** vi.

This can be confusing, as in English the pronoun comes after the verb:

I saw **him**.

It is a good idea, then, to familiarize yourself with saying **him** before the verb in Spanish:

**Lo** vi.

Read through these examples below and translate them:

*La* veo.

*La* llamo.

*Te* veo.

*Te* llamo.

*La* ves.

*La* llamas.

*Nos* ves.

*Nos* llamas.

*Ella* nos ve.

*Ella* nos llama.

The pronoun will be attached to the end of an infinitive verb.

*Ella quiere comprar**lo**.*

This will show up with prepositions that require that an infinitive verb follows:

para + infinitivo

antes de + infinitivo

después de + infinitivo

me gusta + infinitivo

Me gusta ver **películas**.

Me gusta ver**las**.

Después de terminar **la película**, voy a dormir.

Después de terminarla, voy a dormir.

Voy a comprar un libro para leer**lo**.

It will also show up with verbs that take an infinitive verb. In this case, you can either place the pronoun **before the conjugated verb** or **attached to the infinitive**.

ir a + infinitivo

querer + infinitivo

tener que + infinitivo

deber + infinitivo

Let's see some examples

El libro

Voy a comprar**lo**.

o

**Lo** voy a comprar.

Tengo que leer**lo**.

o

**Lo** tengo que leer.

Quiero ver**lo**.

o

**Lo** quiero ver.

Debo terminarlo**lo**.

o

**Lo** debo terminar.

## Personal *a*

When the direct object is a person, the verb will always be followed by *a*. This is called "the personal *a*".

*Veo a una mujer.*

- Sometimes this is used with animals, too, depending on how attached the person is to their animal.

*Amo a mi perro.  
Veo una vaca.*

- It is also used before words that refer to people, such as: alguien, nadie, alguno, ninguno, cualquiera.

- It is **not** used with the verb *tener*.

*Tengo muchos amigos.  
Ella tiene cinco hermanas.*

## Indirect Object Pronouns

### What are they?

Remember that the indirect object answers **to whom** or **for whom** was the action of the verb performed?

We use the following pronouns for the indirect object:

Indirect Object Pronouns	
<b>me</b>	to/for me
<b>te</b>	to/for you
<b>le</b>	to/for him, her
<b>nos</b>	to/for us
<b>os</b>	to/for you (Spain)
<b>les</b>	to/for them, you all

## Where are they placed in a sentence?

Just like the direct object pronouns, they come before a conjugated verb.

Yo **le** pregunté ayer.

or they will be attached to the end of an infinitive verb.

Ella quiere dar**me** un regalo.

📌 Verbs of speech like *decir*, *preguntar*, *pedir*, *contar* will almost always use the indirect object. Practice reading through & translating these examples:

**Te** dije.

Ella **me** preguntó.

**Nos** contó todo.

**Le** pedí un favor a él.

Ellos **me** dijeron todo.

¿**Le** preguntaste a ella?

## Prepositional Phrases

Since the pronouns **le** and **les** can refer to more than one person (him, her, their, you all), a prepositional phrase is added for clarification.

*Le pregunté.*

This is ambiguous. Am I saying I asked him, her, or you?

*Le pregunté a él.*

Now it is clear - it is him I asked.

*No le pregunté a mi hermana.  
Les dije todo a ellos.  
Les pagué por el pan a ustedes.*

Sometimes a prepositional phrase can also be used for emphasis.

*Ella no me preguntó a mí.*

In this example, we do not need to clarify who *me* refers to, as it only refers to me. We are adding the prepositional phrase for emphasis.

Think of how *gustar* works. We use the indirect object pronoun to say that we like something, because in Spanish we are technically saying that it is pleasing **to us**.

*Me gusta aprender español.*

Once again, we can add a preposition phrase for emphasis.

*A mí me gusta aprender español.  
A mí no me gusta el café.*

Or it can be used to clarify.

*A ella le gusta bailar.  
A ellos no les gusta bailar.*

⚠ Remember: **the prepositional phrase is optional, the indirect object pronoun (le) is mandatory.**



## Double Object Pronouns

If you have both a Direct and Indirect Object in a sentence, the Indirect Object will come first. (People first!)

**Te** doy el **libro**.

**Te lo** doy.

If you have a third person Direct and Indirect Object, the indirect will change to "se".

**Le** doy el **libro** a ella.

**✗ Le lo** doy

**✓ Se lo** doy.