

Direct and Indirect Objects

A **direct object** (a noun or pronoun) is the person or thing that receives the action of an action verb.

An **indirect object** (noun or pronoun) is the person or thing that receives the direct object; the indirect object always comes before the direct object.

The controller gave the pilot the instructions.

(*instructions* is the **direct object** because it tells what was given)

(*pilot* is the **indirect object** because it tells who received the *instructions*)

A direct object is never in a prepositional phrase:

The controller gave the instructions to the pilot.

This sentence has a DO *instructions*, but no IO because *pilot* is in a prepositional phrase.

Not all action verbs will take a direct object, and not all direct objects will take an indirect object.

He wrote thoughtfully. (nothing tells what *he wrote*, so there is no direct object)

He wrote a letter. (this sentence has a direct object *letter*, but no indirect object)

He wrote his friend a letter. (this sentence has a direct object *letter* and an indirect object *friend*)

Look at the objects in these sentences:

SUBJECT & VERB

The officer handed

The invention made

I mailed

I mailed

I drove all night.

INDIRECT OBJECT

Mr. Furman

him

my brother

DIRECT OBJECT

a ticket for speeding.

two million dollars.

the letter yesterday.

the letter yesterday.

Notice the difference in the meaning of these two sentences:

Our family eats at the restaurant frequently.

subj vb

Our family eats dinner at the restaurant frequently.

subj vb DO

The first sentence simply tells that our family eats at a particular restaurant. The second sentence tells *what* our family eats at that restaurant. Remember that a noun (*restaurant*) in a prepositional phrase (*at this restaurant*) is the object of a preposition, and is therefore NOT a direct object.

Underline the verbs in the following sentences. If the sentence has a direct object, write it on the line.

1. Did you order food from the deli?

2. Marilyn sang in the choir last year.

3. Marilyn sang a solo at last night's concert.

4. Mr. Vasquez coaches the team every summer.

5. Did you lock the door last night?

6. They must have gone home.

Practice in Finding Direct and Indirect Objects

*Put **DO** over the direct objects and **IO** over the indirect objects in the following sentences. Not all of the sentences have objects. [Remember that an indirect object always comes before the direct object, and a direct object is never in a prepositional phrase.]*

1. They allotted her ten points.
2. The traitor told him the truth.
3. Jose quickly handed the bat to the batter.
4. Theo passed the salt to Jane.
5. Give me that!
6. Our neighbors lent us their car.
7. Sears sent Jim a package.
8. Tell them the answers.
9. Give the instructions to them.
10. Did you pay Jim his money?
11. I read them the riot act.
12. His company paid him \$30,000.
13. The genie granted him three wishes.
14. The diva sang to the audience.
15. Carla sent the letter in the mail.
16. Tina blew Tim a kiss.
17. The Garcias built a new house.
18. She bought that for herself.
19. She left you her dog in her will.
20. The salesman made a great sale.
21. The date cost him \$50 and a bruised ego.
22. The artist drew a picture of her.
23. The artist drew her a picture.
24. He would not show me the magic trick.
25. Jaime threw a foul ball.
26. They fed us potatoes and rice.
27. Ben found Kim an apartment near us.
28. Did you get a new key to the door?
29. The gardener cut a bouquet of flowers.
30. The doorman called a taxi for him.
31. He won his girlfriend a stuffed toy.
32. Tony bought a puppy for his son.
33. The lifeguard taught the kids diving.
34. Joe refuses to write us a letter.
35. Will you make me a sandwich, please?
36. They awarded him the highest honor.