

DIRECT AND INDIRECT OBJECTS

An object is a noun, pronoun, phrase or clause that follows and completes the meaning of a transitive (action) verb. Some objects are direct, and some are indirect.

DIRECT OBJECT

A direct object is a single word (a noun or pronoun), phrase or clause that answers the question “what or whom” after an action verb. **NOTE:** Only **action verbs** take direct objects.

Example: *She threw the ball.*

She is the subject, threw is the verb, and ball is the object that was thrown.

To find the direct object, if there is one, first locate the subject and verb in the sentence.

Example: *We bought 40 pounds of fertilizer.*

We is the subject, and the verb is *bought*. Next ask the question “who” or “what” was bought. The answer is *fertilizer*, 40 pounds worth to be exact.

Nouns or pronouns (words that take the place of, and act like nouns) can be direct objects. Phrases and clauses can also be direct objects. To find the direct object, first find the subject and verb in the sentence.

Example: *Mary threw it.*

Mary is the subject. Threw is the verb. The pronoun “*it*” is the direct object because it answers the question “What did Mary throw?”

Example: *Mary hates wearing hand-me-down clothes.*

Mary is the subject. Hates is the verb. The phrase “*wearing hand-me-down clothes*” is the direct object because it answers the question “What does Mary hate?”

Exercises:

In the following sentences, mark the subject, verb and direct object. (Remember, answers to the questions “Who?” “whom?” or “what?” are needed to make the sentence complete.)

1. He drove the car.
2. We saw seven elephants at the zoo.
3. The dog stole meat off the grill.
4. It took two hours.
5. She asked him for the answers.
6. He told her no invitation was required.
7. The dog caught the Frisbee.

INDIRECT OBJECT

Some action verbs also have indirect objects. An indirect object answers the question “to whom?” “to what?” “for whom?” or “for what?”. An indirect object names the person, place, or thing indirectly affected by the verb.

Example: *She gave the letter to him.*

She is the subject, gave is the verb. Letter answers the question “what?” so it is the direct object. Him answers the question “to whom?”, so it is the indirect object.

Example: *The woman gave her daughter an old Chevette.*

Woman is the subject, and the verb is *gave*. Chevette answers the question “what” was given. *Daughter* is the indirect object because it explains “to whom” the Chevette was given.

Exercises:

In the following sentences, mark the subject, verb, direct object and indirect object. (**REMEMBER:** To locate the indirect object, ask “to whom?” or “to what?” or “for whom?” or “for what?” the action was done.)

1. Kelley left the mail for him.
2. Kelley left him the mail.
3. To whom did you send the money?
4. She gave the class a difficult test.

Answer Key: 1) S,V, DO, IO; 2) S, V, IO, DO; 3) IO, S, V, DO; 4) S, V, IO, DO