LESSON 17

Direct and Indirect Objects

Direct Objects

A **direct object** receives the action in the sentence. It usually answers the question *what?* or *whom?* To find the direct object, find the action verb in the sentence. Then ask *what?* or *whom?* about the verb.

**EXAMPLES**

Sam drove **Jilly** to her mother's house. (*Drove* is the action verb. Whom did Sam drive? **Jilly** is the direct object.)

The coach blew her **whistle**. (*Blew* is the action verb. What did the coach blow? **Whistle** is the direct object.)

Remember to use object pronouns for a direct object.

| **singular**   | me, you, him, her, it |
| **plural**     | us, you, them         |

**EXAMPLES**

Adam invited **us** to the party.
My dog follows **me** everywhere.

Indirect Objects

Sometimes the direct object is received by someone or something. This receiver is called the **indirect object**. It usually comes before the direct object and tells *to whom* the action is directed or *for whom* the action is performed. Only verbs that have direct objects can have indirect objects.

**EXAMPLE**

Lorelei gave the **teacher** her project. (*Gave* is the action verb. **Project** is the direct object because it tells what Lorelei gave. **Teacher** is an indirect object. It tells to whom Lorelei gave her project.)

There are two tests that you can use to identify the indirect object: (1) Look for a noun or a pronoun that precedes the direct object. (2) Determine whether the word you think is a direct object seems to be the understood object of the preposition *to* or *for*.

**EXAMPLE**

The clerk offered the **couple** some tea. (The noun **tea** answers the question *What did the clerk offer?*, so it is the direct object. The understood preposition *to* can be inserted into the sentence before the noun **couple**: *The clerk offered to the couple some tea*. Therefore, **couple** is the indirect object of the sentence.)
Do not confuse direct and indirect objects with objects of prepositions. For example, the words to and for are prepositions. If the word order of the above sentence was changed to include the preposition to, then the sentence would read this way: The clerk offered some tea to the couple. In this new sentence, the word couple is the object of the preposition to; it is not the indirect object.

Remember to use object pronouns for indirect objects.

singular me, you, him, her, it
plural us, you, them

EXAMPLES
My mother gave me a backpack for my books.
Get him a sleeping bag for the camping trip.

**EXERCISE 1**

**Identifying Completers for Action Verbs: Direct Objects and Indirect Objects.**

Identify the underlined word or words in each sentence as a direct (D) or an indirect (I) object.

_____ 1. David gave the Tomkeys candy.
_____ 2. They bought a boat in October.
_____ 3. The Tomkeys did not own a television.
_____ 4. On Halloween David collected candy from the neighbors.
_____ 5. David emptied his bag of candy on the bed.
_____ 6. He tore the wrapper off and crammed the candy bar in his mouth.
_____ 7. David's mother took him to the store to get a Halloween costume.
_____ 8. The chocolate gave David a headache.
_____ 9. David looked through the window and saw the Tomkeys eating dinner.
_____ 10. She put the candy in the Tomkeys bags.

**EXERCISE 2**

**Identifying Direct and Indirect Objects**

Write the direct and indirect objects that appear in the following sentences. If a sentence does not contain a direct or indirect object, write none.

1. Emery and Dinah jogged steadily around the track.
2. The Hellers met us at the restaurant.

3. Heidi is telling the editor her series of story ideas.

4. Give your brother some waffles and strawberries for breakfast.

5. The cousins gathered at the Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs.

6. Their meeting gave each cousin many chances to visit with one another.

7. Mr. Daleberg gave his speech another name.

8. In California, people pick calla lilies at the roadside.


10. Andy sent his girlfriend an e-mail and a surprise gift every day.

EXERCISE 3

Understanding Direct and Indirect Objects

Supply a direct or an indirect object to complete each of the following sentences. You may need to provide a group of words so that the sentence makes sense.

1. At the beginning of the trail we spotted ____________________________.

2. Did Noah see ____________________________?

3. Clark gave ____________________________ a(n) ____________________________.

4. Erin told ____________________________ the ____________________________.

5. A field of iris filled the ____________________________.

6. My grandmother gave ____________________________ a(n) ____________________________ of New York City.
7. The last period of the day gives __________________________ the __________________________ to meet with teachers.

8. I read __________________________ __________________________
   Mr. Bennett had provided about the final exam.

9. The whole family brought __________________________
   __________________________ on his eightieth birthday.

10. As a landscape architect, Rick designed both stone and planted __________________________

**EXERCISE 4**

**Using Direct and Indirect Objects in Your Writing**

Think about a situation in your school or community that has invited strong opinions. Write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper to express your thoughts about the situation. Provide some background about the situation, and clearly state your own opinion about it. Use direct and indirect objects in your letter. Use your own sheet of paper for this exercise.