

## 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.

|                 |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| <b>singular</b> | me, you, him, her, it |
| <b>plural</b>   | 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.

|                 |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| <b>singular</b> | me, you, him, her, it |
| <b>plural</b>   | 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.

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2. The Hellers met us at the restaurant.

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

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

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

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

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7. Mr. Daleberg gave his speech another name.

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

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9. Josefina wove blankets on an old wooden loom.

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

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### 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.