

Objects: Direct and Indirect

There are two types of objects found in the English language: direct objects and indirect objects. Both types of objects work together to reveal the meaning of the sentence. The direct object in a sentence receives the action of the verb. The indirect object in a sentence receives the action of the direct object.

Direct Object

Direct objects directly receive the action of the verb. The direct object usually follows the verb in a sentence.

Examples:

Jenny licked the lollipop.

Sally ate an apple.

Mario smiled at Dr. Smith.

Indirect Object

Indirect objects receive the action of the direct object. The indirect object usually comes before the direct object. It is important to note that not every sentence has an indirect object.

Examples:

Jenny gave her a lollipop.

Milke made Lisa a cake.

Sally brought him a coffee.

How to Identify Direct and Indirect Objects

To locate the direct object, ask yourself, "What or whom is the verb acting on?"

Example:

David listened to Molly. To whom did David listen? Molly.

Mario sold a painting. What is being sold? A painting.

To locate the indirect object, ask yourself who or what is receiving the direct object?

Example:

Mario sold Rosie a painting. The painting is the direct object (What is being sold?). Who is receiving the painting? Rosie.

Gurleen told her friend a secret. The secret is the direct object (What is being told?). Who is receiving the secret? Her friend.