

Direct Object Pronouns

PRONOMI OGGETTO DIRETTO

A direct object (**oggetto diretto**) is a part of speech that follows a verb and answers the question “what?” (**che cosa?**) or “who?” (**chi?**).

In the sentences below **il caffè** and **Mario** are the direct objects of **bere** and **vedere** respectively.



All transitive verbs may have a direct object. The most common verbs followed by a direct object are the following. Notice that **qualcuno** / **qualcosa** answer the questions **Chi?** and **Che cosa?** respectively.

aiutare qualcuno	<i>to help someone</i>
ascoltare qualcuno / qualcosa	<i>to listen to someone / something</i>
aspettare qualcuno / qualcosa	<i>to wait for someone / something</i>
conoscere qualcuno / qualcosa	<i>to know someone / something</i>
guardare qualcuno / qualcosa	<i>to look at, to watch someone / something</i>
incontrare qualcuno	<i>to meet someone</i>
mangiare qualcosa	<i>to eat something</i>
provare qualcosa	<i>to try, to feel something</i>
salutare qualcuno	<i>to greet someone</i>
sapere qualcosa	<i>to know something</i>
studiare qualcosa	<i>to study something</i>
vedere qualcuno / qualcosa	<i>to see someone / something</i>

Notice that **ascoltare** (to listen to), **aspettare** (to wait for), and **guardare** (to watch, to look at) do not have a preposition in Italian.

A direct object may be replaced by a direct object pronoun. Below is a chart that compares subject pronouns with direct object pronouns in Italian and English.

subject pronouns	direct object pronouns	direct object pronouns in English
io	mi	<i>me</i>
tu	ti	<i>you (s)</i>
lui	lo	<i>him / it (m)</i>
lei	la	<i>her / it (f)</i>
Lei	La	<i>you (s/formal)</i>
noi	ci	<i>us</i>
voi	vi	<i>you (pl.)</i>
loro	li	<i>them (m)</i>
	le	<i>them (f)</i>

UNIT 7.1 Grammatica

Notice that:

1. **lo** and **la** are used for persons and things. Therefore, in Italian there is no distinction between “it” and “her” (**la**), or “it” and “him” (**lo**). The only distinction is between genders:
“**la**” (feminine [persons and things]) and “**lo**” (masculine [persons and things]).
2. The plural “them” corresponds to “**li**” and “**le**” with a gender distinction:
“**le**” (feminine [persons and things]) and “**li**” (masculine [persons and things]).

Study these sentences in which the direct object pronouns are contextualized:

Mi ascolti?	<i>Are you listening to me?</i>
Non ti vedo da due settimane!	<i>I haven't seen you (s.) in two weeks.</i>
La aspetto da un'ora.	<i>I have been waiting for her for one hour.</i>
La aspetto da un'ora.	<i>I have been waiting for you [formal] for one hour.</i>
Li incontro sempre al bar.	<i>I always meet them (m) at the bar (café).</i>
Vi aiutiamo quando possiamo.	<i>We help you (pl.) when we can.</i>
Le conosco da molti anni.	<i>I have known them (f) for many years.</i>
Lo saluto quando lo vedo.	<i>I greet him when I see him.</i>
Perché ci guardano?	<i>Why are they looking at us?</i>

Notice that direct object pronouns are placed just before the verb. In a negative sentence they are placed between the “non” and the verb:

Io non mangio **carne**.
(I don't eat meat.)

Io non **la** mangio.
(I don't eat it.)

Indirect Object Pronouns PRONOMI OGGETTO INDIRETTO

An indirect object (*oggetto indiretto*) is a part of speech that follows a verb and answers the question “to whom?” (**a chi?**) or “for whom?” (**per chi?**). All transitive verbs may have an indirect object. Often the indirect object is used in the same sentence with a direct object.

For example, in the sentences below, **a Mario** and **per Lucia** are the indirect objects of the verbs **dare** (to give) and **cucinare** (to cook) respectively. **Un passaggio** and **questa cena** are the direct objects of the same verbs.

Che cosa? *Per chi?*
↓ ↓
Ho dato un passaggio **a Mario**.
(I gave a ride to Mario)

Che cosa? *A chi?*
↓ ↓
Cucino questa cena **per Lucia**.
(I am cooking this dinner for Lucia)

UNIT 7.1 Grammatica

The most common verbs followed by an indirect object (**a qualcuno / per qualcuno**) are listed in the chart below. Notice that these verbs also have a direct object (**qualcuno / qualcosa**).

Note: **Sometimes the English construction may mislead one in incorrectly identifying the direct vs indirect object as in the first example below.

chiedere qualcosa a qualcuno	<i>to ask something to someone to ask someone (ind.) something (dir.)**</i>
consigliare qualcosa a qualcuno	<i>to recommend something to someone</i>
cucinare qualcosa per qualcuno	<i>to cook something for someone</i>
dare qualcosa a qualcuno	<i>to give something to someone</i>
dire qualcosa a qualcuno	<i>to say something to someone</i>
domandare qualcosa a qualcuno	<i>to ask something to someone</i>
imprestare qualcosa a qualcuno	<i>to lend something to someone</i>
insegnare qualcosa a qualcuno	<i>to teach something to someone</i>
leggere qualcosa a qualcuno	<i>to read something to someone</i>
mandare qualcosa a qualcuno	<i>to send something to someone</i>
mostrare qualcosa a qualcuno	<i>to show something to someone</i>
portare qualcosa a qualcuno	<i>to bring something to someone</i>
regalare qualcosa a qualcuno	<i>to give (as a gift) something to someone</i>
restituire qualcosa a qualcuno	<i>to return/give back something to someone</i>
rispondere qualcosa a qualcuno	<i>to answer something to someone</i>
scrivere qualcosa a qualcuno	<i>to write something to someone</i>
spedire qualcosa a qualcuno	<i>to mail something to someone</i>

An indirect object may be replaced by an indirect object pronoun. Below is a chart that compares subject pronouns with indirect object pronouns in Italian and English.

<i>subject pronouns</i>	<i>indirect object pronouns</i>	<i>indirect object pronouns in English</i>
io	mi	<i>to me</i>
tu	ti	<i>to you (s)</i>
lui	gli	<i>to him / it (m)</i>
lei	le	<i>to her / it (f)</i>
Lei	Le	<i>to you (s/formal)</i>
noi	ci	<i>to us</i>
voi	vi	<i>to you (pl.)</i>
loro	gli	<i>to them (m/f)</i>
	--- loro (<i>placed after the verb</i>)	<i>to them (m/f, in written language)</i>

Now compare the forms of direct and indirect object pronouns in Italian. The forms in **bold** are different:

UNIT 7.1 Grammatica

<i>direct object pronouns</i>	<i>indirect object pronouns</i>
mi	mi
ti	ti
lo	gli
la	le
ci	ci
vi	vi
li	gli (m/f)
le	---loro (m/f)

Study these sentences in which the indirect object pronouns are contextualized:

Non mi risponde mai!	<i>He never answers (to) me!</i>
Ti ho preparato una bella cena!	<i>I have prepared a nice dinner for you!</i>
Non le dico mai bugie.	<i>I never tell her lies.</i>
Non gli voglio prestare la mia macchina.	<i>I don't want to lend him my car.</i>
Vi spediamo il pacco appena possibile.	<i>We send you the package as soon as possible.</i>
Ci dicono di avere pazienza.	<i>They tell us to be patient.</i>
Gli ho consigliato un albergo a Roma.	<i>I recommended to him [or to them] a hotel in Rome.</i>
Ho consigliato loro un albergo a Roma. <i>(written language)</i> Gli ho consigliato un albergo a Roma. <i>(spoken language)</i>	<i>I recommended to them a hotel in Rome.</i>

Notice that:

1. “to them” is translated in two ways in Italian: **gli** is mainly used in the spoken language, and **loro** is used in the written language;
2. the indirect object pronoun **loro** is placed after the verb.

Notice that indirect object pronouns (like direct object pronouns) are placed just before the verb, and between the negative “non” and the verb:

Io non porto le valigie **per Mario**.
(I am not carrying the suitcase for Mario.)

Io non **gli** porto le valigie.
(I am not carrying the suitcases for him.)

The following verbs take the indirect object pronoun in Italian, whereas in English they take the direct object pronoun.

UNIT 7.1 *Grammatica*

<p>telefonare a qualcuno</p> <p>Telefono a Luca stasera. Gli telefono stasera.</p>	<p><i>to call someone (on the phone)</i></p> <p><i>I am calling Luca tonight.</i> <i>I am calling him tonight.</i></p>
<p>volere bene a qualcuno</p> <p>Voglio molto bene a Lisa. Le voglio molto bene.</p>	<p><i>to love someone, to care for someone</i></p> <p><i>I love (I care for) Lisa very much.</i> <i>I love her (I care for her) very much.</i></p>
<p>somigliare a qualcuno</p> <p>Non assomiglio a mio padre ma assomiglio a mia madre. Non gli assomiglio ma le assomiglio.</p>	<p><i>to resemble someone, to look like someone</i></p> <p><i>I don't look like my father, but I look like my mother.</i> <i>I don't look like him but I look like her.</i></p>
<p>fare male a qualcuno</p> <p>Nessuno voleva fargli male: è stato un incidente.</p>	<p><i>to hurt someone</i></p> <p><i>No one wanted to hurt him: it was an accident.</i></p>
<p>dispiacere a qualcuno</p> <p>Le dispiace che non sei potuto venire.</p>	<p><i>to feel bad, to be sorry</i></p> <p><i>She feels (To her it feels) bad that you haven't been able to come.</i></p>

Direct and indirect object pronouns with infinitives

Both direct and indirect object pronouns, when used with an infinitive, are attached at the end of the infinitive and the “e” of the infinitive is dropped:

È possibile veder La alle otto?	<i>Is it possible to see you [formal] at 8:00?</i>
I verbi irregolari? È facile studiar li !	<i>Irregular verbs? It's easy to study them.</i>

When an infinitive is used with **dovere**, **potere** and **volere**, the direct and indirect object pronouns are either attached at the end of the infinitive or placed before the conjugated form of **dovere**, **potere** and **volere**:

Non voglio veder li .	<i>I don't want to see them.</i>
Non li voglio vedere.	<i>[same]</i>
Puoi passarm mi del sale?	<i>Can you pass me some salt?</i>
Mi puoi passare del sale?	<i>[same]</i>
Devo insegnar gli l'italiano!	<i>I must teach him Italian!</i>
Gli devo insegnare l'italiano.	<i>[same]</i>