**The Indirect Object**

**Recognize an indirect object when you find one.**

Indirect objects are rare. You can read for paragraphs before you encounter one. For an indirect object to appear, a sentence must first have a direct object.

Direct objects follow transitive verbs (a type of action verb). If you can identify the subject and verb in a sentence, then finding the direct object—*if one exists*—is easy.

Just remember this simple formula:

\[
\text{Subject} + \text{Verb} + \text{What? or Who?} = \text{Direct Object}
\]

Here are examples of the formula in action:

- **Jim built a sandcastle on the beach.**
  
  *Jim* = subject; *built* = verb. Jim built what? *Sandcastle* = direct object.

- **Sammy and Maria brought Billie Lou to the party.**
  
  *Sammy, Maria* = subjects; *brought* = verb. Sammy and Maria brought who? *Billie Lou* = direct object.

- To explain the broken lamp, we told a lie.
  
  *We* = subject; *told* = verb. We told what? *Lie* = direct object.

Whoever (or whatever) gets that direct object is the indirect object.

Consider these new versions of the sentences above:

- **Jim built his granddaughter a sandcastle on the beach.**
  

- So that Darren would have company at the party, Sammy and Maria brought him a blind date.
**Sammy, Maria** = subjects; **brought** = verb. Sammy and Maria brought **who**?

**Blind date** = direct object. Who got that blind date? **Him** = indirect object.

To explain the broken lamp, we told **Mom** a lie.

**We** = subject; **told** = verb. We told **what**? **Lie** = direct object. Who got that lie? **Mom** = indirect object.

## An indirect object will sometimes begin with to or for.

Occasionally, the indirect object will occur in a **prepositional phrase**.

Read these two sentences:

Tomas paid **the mechanic** 200 dollars to fix the squeaky brakes.

Tomas paid 200 dollars **to the mechanic** to fix the squeaky brakes.

In both versions, the **mechanic** (**indirect** object) receives the **200 dollars** (**direct** object).

When the direct object is a **pronoun** rather than a **noun**, putting the indirect object in a prepositional phrase often becomes a necessary modification. The **preposition** smooths out the sentence.

Consider this example:

Leslie did not have enough money for the sandwich, so Smitty purchased **her** it.

Blech! That version is awful! But now try the sentence with the indirect object after a preposition:

Leslie did not have enough money for the sandwich, so Smitty purchased it **for her**.

Locating the indirect object **her** in a prepositional phrase makes the sentence less choppy!

Now read this example:

After Michael helped himself to the stuffing, he passed **us** it.
Ewww! This version is awful too! But with a quick fix, we can solve the problem:

After Michael helped himself to the stuffing, he passed it to us.

With the indirect object us in a prepositional phrase, we have a smooth sentence!