

Indirect Objects and Indirect Object Pronouns

In English, the Indirect Object follows the verb in an active voice sentence just as a Direct Object does. But the function of an Indirect Object is different. Instead of being the object of the action of the verb as a Direct Object does, the Indirect Object names the person or thing to whom or for whom the action is performed. We say that we write "to a person", or we did something "for a person", or that we take something or borrow something "from someone".

Indirect Object Pronouns

Yo	Me	Nos	Nosotros
Tú	Te	Os	Vosotros
Él, ella, usted	Le	Les	Ellos, ellas, uds.

E.g: I give a ticket to the speeding, maniacal driver.

Now replace the Indirect Object "the speeding maniacal driver" with the Indirect Object Pronoun "him" or "her".

I give him (or her) ticket

Him (or her) = and Indirect Object Pronoun. It refers to the driver without naming him (or her)

Yo le doy una bófeta al chofer loco

Let's replace the Indirect Object (*chofer*) with the Indirect Object Pronoun (*le*). We use *le* because *chofer* is singular. *Le* represents her, him, you (formal), it

Yo doy una boleta (le)

The "to" is understood since the object pronoun is in the Indirect form. And, like the Direct Object pronoun, in Spanish you must place the indirect object directly in front of the active (conjugated) verb:

Yo le doy una bófeta

But wait!! The "le" was already there! The sample sentence was "Yo le doy una bófeta al chofer loco"

This is because Spanish uses **redundant object pronouns** to specify the person to whom the speaker is referring. In English, we either use the pronoun or name the indirect object but not both:

“You give the money to Thomas” OR “You give the money to him”. BUT NOT “You give him the money to Thomas”.

I have to replace Thomas' name with the pronoun in English - I can't use both in English.

But we can use both the pronoun and the indirect object in Spanish!

In fact, even when you identify the person by name, you still use an Indirect Object pronoun:

Yo le doy el dinero a Tomás

You cannot say “Yo doy el dinero a Tomás”. You still need to use “le”

The "*a Tomás*" identifies to whom you are referring specifically: we know that *Le* (him) refers to *Tomás*.

If I say, "Te doy el dinero" or "Sara nos dio la información" or even "Sara me escribió un email", we know who the indirect object is (You, us or me). It is with "le" and "les" that confusion can occur:

"Le di el libro" is vague if we don't already know whom I am talking about. It means "I gave the book to him or her."

"Le di el libro a Juan" is much clearer: I gave the book to Juan.

"Les mandé las cartas" is not as specific as "Les mandé las cartas a Ken y Barbie." It all depends upon whether you need to clarify to whom you are referring.

Note that we use the Personal "a" when we add the indirect object:

- Le di el libro a Antonio.
- Me dio las flores a mí.
- Nos describió la escena a nosotros.
- Les mostró las fotos a los estudiantes.
- Te dio un beso a ti