

Personal “A”

In Spanish when people are the direct objects of verbs, we need to put an "a" in front of them. Direct objects are nouns that are affected directly by verbs. They receive the action of the verb. Look at the first sentence in the table below. "Janet" is the direct object because she is what (who) I "see". In the meantime, Direct objects can be things or people; **but the personal "a" is used only when the direct object is a person.** We put an "a" in front of the noun when it refers to a specific person or specific people

People

Veo a Janet los lunes.	I see Janet on Mondays.
Francesca llama a su esposo cada día.	Francesca calls her husband every day.
Visitamos a nuestros abuelos.	We visit our grandparents.

Things: we do not use the Personal “a” with things, places or actions:

Veo la bicicleta.	I see the bicycle.
Visitamos la universidad.	We visit the university.

The Personal *a* is not used when you are referring to an indefinite person (you don't know if such a person exists) or an unspecific person.

For example:

Ana quiere un novio inteligente. Ana hasn't met this intelligent boyfriend yet; but that is the type of boyfriend she wants.

The use of the Indefinite Article *un* is a clue not to use the Personal *a*

If Ana knows the intelligent boyfriend of *Susana*, we would say, *Ana conoce al novio inteligente de Susana*

Don't forget that *a + el* contracts to form *al*

People

Busco al dependiente.	I'm looking for the sales clerk.
Miro al primo de Mauricio.	I'm looking at Maurice's cousin.

Things: no Personal “a” here!

Busco el bolígrafo de mi hermana.	I'm looking for my sister's pen.
Miro el programa de Animal Planet.	I'm watching the Animal Planet program.

Don't use the personal "a" with *Tener*