

## DIRECT OBJECTS, INDIRECT OBJECTS, AND SUBJECT COMPLEMENTS

1. A **direct object** follows an action verb and answers the question “Whom?” or “What?” It is always a noun or a pronoun. Not all action verbs require direct objects. Study the following examples:

Joe likes **apples** and **corn**. The direct objects “apples” and “corn” answer “Joe likes what?”

The boy in the red coat bought a new **kite**. “Kite” answers “The boy bought what?”

Henry waited on the corner. There is no direct object following the action verb “waited.”

2. An **indirect object** comes between the action verb and the direct object and answers the question “To whom?” or “For whom?” It is always a noun or pronoun and never appears by itself without a direct object. (Note: The words “to” and “for” are only implied in the sentence; if they actually appear in the sentence, then you have a prepositional phrase, not an indirect object.) For example:

Joe gave **me** an apple. The indirect object “me” answers “Joe gave an apple to whom?” “Me” comes between the action verb “gave” and the direct object “apple.” (There is no indirect object in these sentences: “Joe gave to me an apple,” or “Joe gave an apple to me.”)

The boy in the red coat bought his **brother** a new kite. The indirect object “brother” answers “The boy bought a new kite for whom?” “Brother” comes between the action verb “bought” and the direct object “kite.”

3. A **subject complement** follows a linking verb (is, are, was, were, am, be, seems, feels, etc.) and renames or describes the subject of the sentence. Subject complements may be nouns, pronouns, or adjectives. Study the following examples:

Joe is a **vegetarian**. The subject complement “vegetarian” follows the linking verb “is” and renames the subject “Joe.”

The boy’s new kite was **blue**. The subject complement “blue” follows the linking verb “was” and describes the subject “kite.”

4. Knowing the definitions above can help you determine the correct pronoun to use in a sentence. Subject pronouns--I, she, he, it, you, we, they, who--can only be used as subjects of a sentence or clause or as subject complements. Object pronouns--me, her, him, it, you, us, them, whom--are used primarily as direct or indirect objects or as objects of prepositions. Study the following examples:

**It** is **I** **who** will give the speech. “It” is the subject. “I” is the subject complement that follows the linking verb “is” and refers back to “it.” “Who” is the relative pronoun which refers back to “I” and introduces the clause “who will give the speech.”

Give the money to Billy and **him**. Along with the word “Billy,” “him” is the object of the preposition “to.”

Just between **you** and **me**, I think the coach will be fired. “You” and “me” are objects of the preposition “between.” (Note: The subject pronoun “I” can never be used with “between.”)