

5202 GRAMMAR (Übung; ECTS 3)

Winter Semester 2003-04

Tuesdays 16-18 in A3, Wednesdays 8-10 in C29

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Direct Objects, Indirect Objects, Objective Complements
Subject Complements: Predicate Nominative, Predicate Adjective

Complement: A complement is a word or group of words that completes the meaning of the predicate of a sentence. Complements can be nouns, pronouns, or adjectives. In the following sentences, the various complements are underlined.

- The invaders plundered the town.
- Allison told her a secret.
- The President appointed her Attorney General.
- That tree is an oak.
- The frozen lake looked smooth.

Some sentences require complements to be complete. Without the information provided by the complement they simply don't make sense.

- ? Grace sent.
- ? The people elected.
- ? Wild animals are.

Direct Objects: A direct object is a noun, pronoun or group of words acting as a noun that receives the action of a transitive verb. To find a direct object, ask What? or Whom? after an action verb.

- The carpenter is sanding the bookcase. → sanding what? → the bookcase = direct object
- The army blanketed the soldier. → covered whom? → the soldier = direct object

A direct object may be a compound direct object. In this case you will get two or more answers to the What? or Whom? question.

- The carpenter is sanding the bookcase and its shelves. → bookcase, shelves = direct objects
- The blanket covered the soldier and his rifle. → soldier, rifle = direct objects

Only transitive verbs can have direct objects! (See handouts "Transitive and Intransitive Verbs" and "Action and Linking Verbs")

- The tidal wave sank the ship. → sank what? → the ship = direct object
- The wheels sank into the mud. → sank what? → no answer → intransitive verb, no direct object in this sentence

Direct Objects Exercise: Identify the direct objects in each of the following sentences.

1. No one heard the announcement on the radio.
2. His nephew searched closets, drawers, and cupboards for the will.
3. Torches lit the tunnels in the gloomy mine shaft.
4. Amy's mother invited most of her friends and relatives to the party.
5. The dog guarded his sleeping mistress and her sick child.
6. The mob threw rotten fruits and vegetables at the well-dressed duke.
7. Jackals gnaw bones with their powerful jaws.