

# English grammar: Direct - indirect object

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The English verbs are followed by two different kinds of objects - the direct object and indirect object.

*I sent Mary some flowers.*

*I sent some flowers to Mary.*

These sentences contain both direct and indirect objects. Flowers are the direct object and it refers to *what* I sent. Mary is the indirect object and it refers to *whom* I sent it.

## Use

1. If the indirect object comes before the direct object, there is no preposition.

*They gave Harold a new car.*

2. If the indirect object comes after the direct object, a preposition must be used.

*They gave a new car to Harold.*

3. If the direct object is a pronoun (it, this ... ), it comes before the indirect object and a preposition must be used.

*I bought it for my sister.*

*Can you send it to him?*

(Not: *I bought my sister it. Can you send him it?*)

## Notes

1. If the verbs *read* and *write* are only followed by the indirect object, a preposition must be used.

*Please, read to me.* (Not: *Please, read me.*)

But: *Read me the letter. Read the letter to me.* (There are two objects in these sentences.)

*I'll write to you soon.*

But: *I'll write you a letter. I'll write a letter to you.* (two objects)

2. We can use the verbs *promise*, *show*, and *tell* with the indirect object only, but without a preposition.

*I can't promise you.* (Or: *I can't promise it to you.* – with two objects)

*Show him.* (Or: *Show it to him.*)

*Can you tell me?*