



## ***Verbs with Direct or Indirect Object Pronouns***

When students first study direct object pronouns in Italian, things seem quite easy. It just takes some time to memorize all the different pronouns but their use is very straightforward. The same can be said for indirect object pronouns but things become a bit more complicated when you need to figure out whether to use one or the other.

What does the trick is something very simple: **knowing which verbs require a direct or an indirect object pronoun**. Anyway, in order to clearly understand the topic, it is better not to rush and begin this post with the use of direct and indirect object pronouns before focusing on verbs.

Let's first see what direct object pronouns are.

### **Direct object pronouns**

Direct object pronouns **replace a noun and have the function of the direct object**. Those pronouns are used when the verb is not followed by any preposition and answer the question "Chi? Che cosa?" (Who? What?).

*Francesca prenota la vacanza - Francesca la prenota* = Francesca books a holiday - Francesca books it

-> *la* replaces *la vacanza*

*Noi vediamo i ragazzi ogni sera - Noi li vediamo* = We see the guys every evening - We see them

-> *li* replaces *i ragazzi*

Direct pronouns can be stressed (*tonici*) or unstressed (*atoni*):

#### **Unstressed direct pronouns (*atoni*)**

*mi*

*ti*

*lo, la*

*ci*

*vi*

*li, le*

#### **Stressed direct pronouns (*tonici*)**

*me*

*te*

*lui, lei*

*noi*

*voi*

*loro*

*Mia sorella vede me (tonico) - Mia sorella mi vede (atono) = My sister sees me*  
*I ragazzi chiamano noi (tonico) - I ragazzi ci chiamano (atono) = The boys call us*

Unstressed direct object pronouns (*atoni*) are **more commonly used in Italian** and they are **placed before the verb**. You use stressed direct object pronouns only if you really want to put an emphasis on the pronoun and they go after the verb.

*Ho visto lui, non lei = I have seen him, not her*  
*Mario ha ringraziato lei, non sua sorella = Mario has thanked her, not her sister*

If the verb is at *passato prossimo*, **the past participle matches in gender and number with the direct object pronoun**.

*Ho visto le ragazze - Le ho viste = I have seen the girls - I have seen them*  
*Ho sentito gli spari - Li ho sentiti = I have heard the shots - I have heard them*

When the verb is at *imperativo*, *gerundio* or *infinito*, **direct object pronouns must be placed after the verb as their suffix**.

*Avvisa Mario! - Avvisalo! = Inform Mario! - Inform him!*

*Imparerai meglio studiando l'italiano di più - Imparerai meglio studiandolo di più = You'll learn better if you study Italian more - You'll learn better if you study it more*

*Domani i nonni verranno a trovare me e mia sorella - Domani i nonni verranno a trovarci =*  
Tomorrow our grandparents will visit me and my sister - Tomorrow our grandparents will visit us



Then there are the indirect object pronouns.

### Indirect object pronouns

Indirect object pronouns have the function of **the indirect object**. They are used when the verb is followed by the preposition **a** (*to*) and they answer the question “*A chi? A che cosa?*” (To whom? For what?).

*Mio fratello ha telefonato a Maria - Mio fratello le ha telefonato = My brother called Maria - My brother called her*  
-> *le* replaces *a Maria*

*La maestra ha parlato ai ragazzi - La maestra gli ha parlato = The teacher spoke to the kids - The teacher spoke to them*  
-> *gli* replaces *ai ragazzi*

As for direct objects, we can have indirect object pronouns that are stressed (*tonici*) or unstressed (*atoni*):

**Unstressed indirect pronouns (atoni)****Stressed indirect pronouns (tonici)***mi**a me**ti**a te**gli, le**a lui, a lei**ci**a noi**vi**a voi**loro**a loro*

*Mia mamma scrive una cartolina a lei (tonico) - Mia sorella le scrive una cartolina (atono) = My mom writes a postcard to her*

*Francesco telefona a lui (tonico) - Francesco gli telefona (atono) = Francesco calls him*

Unstressed indirect object pronouns (*atoni*) are more commonly used in Italian and are **placed before the verb**. You use stressed indirect object pronouns only if you really want to put an emphasis on the pronoun and they go after the verb.

*Ho chiesto a lui, non a te! = I have asked him not you*

*Ho telefonato a te, non a tua sorella = I have called you not your sister*

When the verb is at *imperativo*, *gerundio* or *infinito*, **indirect object pronouns must be placed after the verb as their suffix**.

*Chiedi a Francesca - Chiedile = Ask Francesca - Ask her*

*Puoi avere notizie solo telefonando a Francesco - Puoi avere notizie solo telefonandogli = You can have news only if you call Francesco - You can have news only if you call him*

*Ieri sono andato a parlare alla maestra - Ieri sono andato a parlarle = Yesterday I went and spoke to the teacher - Yesterday I went and spoke to her*



This seems quite clear, right? Actually, the real issue comes when you need to choose between a direct object pronoun or an indirect object pronoun.

One of the questions I get asked the most is: "**how do I know if I need to use the direct or the indirect object pronoun?**". The answer always is: "I am sorry, there is no easy explanation, it depends on the verb".

In general, there are verbs that require direct object pronouns and others that require indirect object pronouns only. But things are not that easy because **some verbs can take both direct and indirect object pronouns** depending on their meaning.

To make things easier for you, I have decided to make **a list of the most common verbs** that take either direct or indirect object pronouns and of those that can take both.

The most common verbs that **take a direct object pronoun** are:

*accendere, aiutare, amare, aprire, ascoltare, aspettare, avere, capire, cercare, chiamare, chiudere, conoscere, dimenticare, finire, guidare, imparare, mangiare, perdere, pulire, ricevere, rimproverare, sapere, sbagliare, spendere, spegnere, trovare* (and many others).

Please note: since transitive verbs are those followed by an object, all transitive verbs take a direct object pronoun.

The most common verbs that **take an indirect object pronoun** are:

*bastare, credere, mancare, parlare, piacere, rimanere, sembrare, servire, succedere, telefonare, voler bene*, etc

The most common verbs that can take **both a direct and an indirect object pronoun** are:

*chiedere, comprare, consigliare, cucinare, dare, dire, domandare, fare, insegnare, lasciare, mandare, mostrare, offrire, ordinare, pagare, portare, prendere, preparare, presentare, prestare, scrivere, raccontare, regalare, rendere, ricordare, ripetere, riportare, spedire, spiegare*, etc.

For example, *dire* can take both a direct and an indirect object pronoun:

*Ho detto una cosa - L'ho detta* = I have said something - I have said it

*Ho detto a Maria di tornare a casa - Le ho detto di tornare a casa* = I told Maria to return home - I told her to return home

Another example can be with the verb *spedire*:

*Ho spedito una lettera - L'ho spedita* = I have mailed a letter - I have mailed it

*Ho spedito un pacco a Marco - Gli ho spedito un pacco* = I have mailed a package to Mario - I have mailed a package to him

