

# Direct Object

A direct [object](#) in English grammar is a noun, [pronoun](#), or noun [phrase](#) that shows who or what receives the action of a verb, performed by a [subject](#) specified at the start of the [sentence](#).

A direct object may appear as a noun, pronoun, or a compound noun in a sentence. For instance, in the excerpt, “She closed the carton carefully. First she kissed her father, then she kissed her mother. Then she opened the lid again, lifted the pig out, and held it against her cheek” (*Charlotte’s Web*, by E.B. White), all the underlined words are direct objects.

## Everyday Use of Direct Object

Sara returned the dress to the designer.

“Dress” is the direct object in this sentence, being the thing that was returned.

The sailor sailed the ship across the Indian Ocean.

“Ship” is the direct object in this sentence, being the thing that was sailed.

Sally took them with her to the market.

“Them” is a pronoun functioning as the direct object in this sentence, being who Sally took.

Julie invited us to the dinner.

“Us” is a pronoun serving as the direct object, being who Julie invited.

Dad drove mom and me to the airport.

“Mom” and “me” are compound direct objects in this sentence, being who Dad drove.

## Examples of Direct Object in Literature

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### Example #1: *Cherry Orchard* (by Anton Chekhov)

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“Lopakhin. Your brother, Leonid Andreyevitch, says I’m a snob, a usurer, but that is absolutely nothing to me. Let him talk. Only I

do wish you would believe in me as you once did, that your wonderful, touching eyes would look at me as they did before. Merciful God! My father was the serf of your grandfather and your own father, but you — you more than anybody else — did so much for me once upon a time that I've forgotten everything and love you as if you belonged to my family . . .”

The underlined words “I” and “me” in this paragraph are the direct objects of the noun “Leonid Andreyevitch;” while “your” is the direct object of pronoun “my.”

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**Example #2: *The Courage of Turtles* (by Edward Hoagland)**

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“[The developers] bulldozed the banks to fill in the bottom, and landscaped the flow of water that remained.”

Hoagland has beautifully used “the banks” and “the flow of water” as direct objects of noun “the developers.”

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**Example #3: *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (by James Joyce)**

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“A fellow had once seen a big rat jump into the scum. Mother was sitting at the fire with Dante waiting for Brigid to bring in the tea. Dante knew a lot of things. She had taught him where the Mozambique Channel was and what was the longest river in America and what was the name of the highest mountain in the moon. Father Arnall knew more than Dante ... Rody Kickham held the ball by its greasy lace. A fellow asked him to give it one last: but he walked on without even answering the fellow. Simon Moonan told him not to because the prefect was looking. The fellow turned to Simon Moonan and said.”

This is another good example that has used direct objects as underlined. In the first sentence, “rat” is the direct object of the noun “fellow,” while “things” is the direct object of the noun “Dante.”

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#### Example #4: *Oedipus Rex* (by Sophocles)

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“PRIEST: O ruler of my country, Oedipus, You see our company around the altar; you see our ages; some of us, like these, who cannot yet fly far, and some of us heavy with age ... King, you yourself have seen our city reeling like a wreck ... I pity you, children. You have come full of longing ... Thanks for your gracious words. Your servants here signal that Creon is this moment coming.”

In this example, there are four direct objects “our,” “us,” “you,” “children,” and “Creon.” “Our” is the direct object of the pronoun “you” as the work is done on it.

### **Function of Direct Object**

Direct objects, like other types of objects, are recipients of actions performed in the sentence. A direct object may be a noun or a pronoun. Not only does it makes text clear and understandable but also shifts meanings of the verb forward. In fact, the major function of a direct object is to give the readers information about an action by showing extra details about it. It tells more about the subject, or in some cases shows complete action performed it. In writing, it is used for precision, directness, and brevity.