

Verbs with two objects

Many English verbs take two objects – one direct object and one indirect object. The direct object usually refers to an object. The indirect object usually refers to a person and comes first.

He gave his daughter a camera for Christmas. (Indirect object – his daughter, direct object – camera)

Could you lend me some money? (Indirect object – me, direct object – money)

Let me get you a cup of coffee. (Indirect object – you, direct object – a cup of coffee)

Some common verbs which can be followed by two objects are given below:

Bring, buy, cost, get, give, leave, lend, make, offer, owe, pass, pay, play, promise, read, refuse, send, show, sing, take, teach, tell, wish, write

Position of the direct and indirect objects

The indirect object usually comes before the direct object. We can also put the indirect object after the direct object. When the indirect object comes after the direct object, it usually has the preposition *to* or *for* before it.

She sent the flowers for me, not for you.

I handed my credit card to the salesman.

When both objects are pronouns

When both objects are pronouns, it is common to put the indirect object last. In informal style, *to* is occasionally dropped after it.

Lend them to her.

Send some to him.

It is also possible to put the indirect object first.

Send him some.

The verbs explain, suggest and describe

Verbs with two objects

The verbs explain, suggest and describe are not used with the structure indirect object + direct object.

Please explain your decision to us.

Can you suggest a good cardiologist to me? (NOT Can you suggest me a good cardiologist?)

One object or two

Some verbs can be followed by either a direct object, or an indirect object, or both.

I asked him.

I asked a question.

I asked him a question.