

Finding the Direct Object

A direct object can be a person or thing that receives the action of the verb directly. When trying to determine the direct object, you should ask two questions: whom or what.

Let's see an example –

Mount St. Helens released a lot smoke last week.
Subject Verb Direct Object

In this example, if you ask yourself, “What did Mount St. Helens release?” the answer is “a lot of smoke.”

“A lot of smoke” is the direct object.

Another example –

Parents can't take their child to school.
Subject Verb D. Object

In this example, if you ask yourself, “Whom can't the parents take to school?” the answer is “their child.”

“Their child” is the direct object.

IMPORTANT: As you can see, the questions ask “whom” or “what” the subject is or isn't doing to something or someone else. The answer to the question will provide you with the direct object. Let's look at another example:

Crude oil has gone up since the beginning of the year.
Subject Verb When

In the preceding example, the information following the verb does not answer to the questions “whom” or “what.” As a result, the sentence does not have an object. The information after the verb answers to the question “when.”

Look at another example –

The man marched down the street at dawn.
Subject Verb Where When

Again, the example shows you that the information provided after the verb answers to other types of questions. As a result, this sentence does not have an object.

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