

## Lesson 5

# Direct Object Pronouns

Direct object pronouns are pronouns that replace the object of a verb. Don't let the word "object" confuse you as we are not necessarily talking about inanimate objects such as a telephone, a desk or a microphone. We are talking about the thing that the action is performed onto.

## English vs Italian

What about **IT**?

The direct object pronoun **IT** is not very clear in English because **IT** can be either the subject of a sentence (*It is yellow*) or the object of a verb (*I want it*). Luckily, in Italian, this doesn't quite happen (also because we don't really have a current work to say '**IT**' as the subject of a sentence!).

Same goes for **YOU** and **YOU** plural (*you sing* - where **YOU** is the subject VS *I see you* - where **YOU** is the object).

## Why use Direct Object Pronouns

Here are some pairs of sentences that demonstrate why we need the direct object pronouns. Basically, it saves time and avoids repetition if we already know what the object is. Let's go through these and at the end of the lesson, come back and rewrite these sentences using correct direct object pronoun where required.

**Leggo il libro. Leggo il libro tutti i giorni**

**Conosco Maria. Conosco Maria da tre anni.**

**Compro una pizza e porto la pizza per cena.**



Tu mangi i formaggi stagionati?

No, non mangio i formaggi stagionati.

## Guessing Game / 'Indovina Indovinello'

Where will these pronouns go?

They go right before the verb! All pronouns except for stressed pronouns must be attached to the verb. They are "weak" so they need to lean on the front of the verb.

What would you guess the pronoun referring to yourself to be?

**MI**

And you? Us? You Plural?

You            **Ti**

Us              **Ci**

You (plural) **Vi**

## Trick: Me, me, me!

An easy way to remember both indirect and direct object pronouns is to remember that when anything is to do with "me", in Italian we use the word **MI**. Anything to do with "you" is going to be **TI**. If it's about "us", it will be **CI**. Likewise, anything to do with "you [plural]" is going to be **VI**.

## Real issue: 3rd person singular

As you see, four of these pronouns are exactly the same as the set you have already learned for the Indirect Object Pronouns. The real problem is in the third person, as it is that they differ.

Masculine > **LO**

Feminine > **LA**



What about **IT**? In Italian, we look at the object of a verb as being either masculine or feminine, without making a distinction between human and non-human.

**Lo vedo** I see him / it The thing we are talking about is singular and masculine

**La vedo** I see her / it The thing that we are talking about is singular and feminine

How would you respond to the following questions?

**Vedi Marco?** Sì, lo vedo / No, non lo vedo

**Vedi l'albero?** Sì, lo vedo / No, non lo vedo

**Vedi Marta?** Sì, la vedo / No, non la vedo

**Vedi la piazza?** Sì, la vedo / No, non la vedo

## Real issue: 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural

We have to more pronouns for when we need to replace a verb's object that happens to be in the third person plural (*they*).

Maschile > **LI**

Femminile > **LE**

**Li vedo** I see them / those things The things that I see are masculine and plural

**Le vedo** I see them / those things The things that I see are feminine and plural



## All direct object pronouns

<b>Mi</b>	me
<b>Ti</b>	you
<b>Lo</b>	him / it (masculine)
<b>La</b>	Her / it (feminine) / you (formal)
<b>Ci</b>	us
<b>Vi</b>	you (plural)
<b>Li</b>	them (masculine)
<b>Le</b>	them (feminine)

It'll take some time to get used to the fact that the 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns are the same for human and non-human objects. But the sooner you do that, the better for you!

Basically, as everything has gender in Italian, there is no real need for the concept of "it".

## So many options...!

Can you sense the difference in meaning across the four expressions below?

**La parli?**

**Lo parli?**

**Le parli?**

**Gli parli?**

The first two are using the direct object pronouns.

**La parli?**      *Do you speak it? (feminine thing)*

I could be referring to language: **LA LINGUA**.



**Lo parli?**      *Do you speak it? (masculine thing)*

I could be referring to a specific language: **L'ITALIANO**, **LO SPAGNOLO**, **IL FRANCESE**, etc.

The next two give a very different meaning because they are using the indirect object pronouns.

**Le parli?**      *Do you speak to her / with her?*

**Gli parli?**      *Do you speak to him / with him?*

This is why it is so important to know the difference between the direct and indirect object pronouns, especially when using the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular or plural, as they can completely change the meaning of the sentence!

## Avoid confusion!

Don't get mixed up with the **direct object pronouns** and the **indirect object pronouns**.

### DIRECT PRONOUNS

MI

TI

LO

LA

CI

VI

LI

LE

### INDIRECT PRONOUNS

MI

TI

GLI

LE

CI

VI

GLI

GLI



By now you might have noticed that **LE** actually has three possible meanings:

### 1) Definite article (feminine plural):

**Le ragazze**                      *The girls*

**Le pere**                              *The pears*

This is easier to distinguish as it is followed by a noun.

### 2) Direct object (feminine plural)

**Le mangio**      *I eat them (feminine objects)*

**Le vedo**              *I see them (feminine objects)*

### 3) Indirect object (feminine singular)

**Le parlo**              *I speak to her*

**Le do**                      *I give to her*

So how do we distinguish between these last two in an everyday situation? Context will tell you! Most verbs need to have an object, but not all verbs work with a recipient. So if you hear **LE** followed by a verb, chances are they are talking about an object, as this is the most likely scenario.

Then, of course, we can do whatever we want with these pronouns and use them based on our needs and what we wish to omit and replace in our speech.

**Porto un regalo a Simona.**                      *I bring a present to Simona*

**Le porto un regalo.**                              *I bring (to) her a present.*

**Lo porto a Simona.**                              *I bring it to Simona.*



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## Can we use direct object pronouns with the verb PIACERE?

Discuss this in the forum, giving explanations for why we can or can't use them with PIACERE.

### Opening Text

This is the text I used at the beginning of this lesson. Now that you know more about the direct object pronouns, go ahead and replace the object/topic of this text with the correct pronoun.

OGGI VI VORREI PARLARE DEL MIO TELEFONO.

IO USO IL TELEFONO SOPRATTUTTO PER NAVIGARE SU INTERNET,

MA QUALCHE VOLTA USO IL TELEFONO ANCHE PER TELEFONARE.

ADORO IL MIO TELEFONO E TRATTO IL MIO TELEFONO MOLTO BENE

PERCHÉ NON VOGLIO ROMPERE IL MIO TELEFONO.

