

A **DIRECT OBJECT PRONOUN** is a word that replaces a noun and functions as a direct object of a verb (see *Pronouns*, p. 37; *Object*, p. 142).

Max saw **her**.

Max saw **whom**? Answer: Her.

**Her** is the direct object of the verb **saw**.

In this chapter we shall look at direct object pronouns. Other object pronouns are studied in *What is an Indirect Object Pronoun?*, p. 153 and *What is a Disjunctive Pronoun?*, p. 161.

### IN ENGLISH

Most object pronouns are different from subject pronouns. The same form is used for direct object, indirect object, and disjunctive pronouns.

	SUBJECT PRONOUN	OBJECT PRONOUN
<b>SINGULAR</b>		
1 <sup>st</sup> person	I	me
2 <sup>nd</sup> person	you	you
3 <sup>rd</sup> person	he	him
	she	her
	it	it
<b>PLURAL</b>		
1 <sup>st</sup> person	we	us
2 <sup>nd</sup> person	you	you
3 <sup>rd</sup> person	they	them

Let us look at two examples of direct object pronouns.

He saw **him**.

subject      direct object  
pronoun      pronoun

We met **them** at home.

subject      direct object  
pronoun      pronoun

### IN FRENCH

As in English, pronouns used as direct objects are different from pronouns used as subjects. Unlike English, different forms are used for direct and indirect object pronouns.

Let us look at French direct object pronouns to see how they are formed. We have divided them into two groups.

### 1st AND 2nd PERSON SING. AND PL. (me, you, us)

The direct object pronouns of the 1st and 2nd persons have only one form per person. Just select the form you need from the chart below.

	SUBJECT	DIRECT OBJECT	SUBJECT	DIRECT OBJECT
<b>Singular</b>				
1st person	je	<b>me</b>	<i>I</i>	<b>me</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> person	tu	<b>te</b>	<i>you</i>	<b>you</b>
<b>Plural</b>				
1 <sup>st</sup> person	nous	<b>nous</b>	<i>we</i>	<b>us</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> person	vous	<b>vous</b>	<i>you</i>	<b>you</b>

To simplify our examples, we have used the verb **to see** (*voir*) because both the English and the French verbs take a direct object.

Max sees **me**.

1. Identify the verb: to see
2. What is the French equivalent: **voir**
3. Does the French verb need a preposition before an object: No
4. Function of pronoun in French: direct object
5. Selection: **me**

Max **me** voit.

Max sees **you**.

Max **te** voit.

Max **vous** voit.

Max sees **us**.

Max **nous** voit.

Establishing the function of **nous** and **vous** can be confusing. Not only are the same forms used as subject and object, but both subject and object pronouns are placed before the verb. In case of doubt, look at the verb. Remember that verbs agree with their subject. If **nous** is the subject, the verb will end in

**-ons**; if it doesn't, **nous** is an object of some kind. The same is true with **vous**. If it is the subject of the verb, the ending of regular verbs will be **-ez**.

**Nous** vous voyons tous les jours.

**We see** you everyday.

**Vous** nous voyez tous les jours.

**You see** us everyday.

### 3rd PERSON SING. AND PL. (him, her, it, them)

The direct object pronouns of the 3rd person singular have a masculine and feminine form. The gender of **it** depends on the gender of its antecedent; that is, the noun that is being replaced. There is only one form for **them**.

	SUBJECT	DIRECT OBJECT	SUBJECT	DIRECT OBJECT
<b>Singular</b>				
Masculine	il	<b>le</b>	<i>he, it</i>	<b>him, it</b>
Feminine	elle	<b>la</b>	<i>she, it</i>	<b>her, it</b>
<b>Plural</b>				
Masculine	ils	<b>les</b>	<i>they</i>	<b>them</b>
Feminine	elles			

For our examples we have again used the verb **to see** (*voir*) because both the English and French verbs take a direct object.

*Do you see Max? Yes, I see **him**.*

*Voyez-vous Max? Oui, je **le** vois.*

*Do you see Julia? Yes, I see **her**.*

*Voyez-vous Julia? Oui, je **la** vois.*

*Do you see the girls? Yes, I see **them**.*

*Voyez-vous les jeunes filles? Oui, je **les** vois.*

**It** as a direct object requires that you establish the gender of the noun it replaces (i.e., its antecedent).

*Do you see the book? Yes, I see **it**.*

1. Antecedent: book → livre → masculine

2. Gender of it: masculine → **le**

*Voyez-vous le livre? Oui, je **le** vois.*

Do you see the table? Yes, I see **it**.

1. Antecedent: table → table → feminine

2. Gender of it: feminine → **la**

Voyez-vous la table? Oui, je **la** vois.

Unlike English where direct object pronouns are placed after the verb, in French they are usually placed before the verb. Consult your textbook for the placement of pronouns.

**CAREFUL** — Make sure you establish the type of object appropriate for the French verb, not necessarily the same type as for the English verb (see *Relationship of a verb to its object*, pp. 146-7). For object pronouns used with verbs in the affirmative imperative see p. 163 in *What is a Disjunctive Pronoun?*.

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### REVIEW ACTIVITY

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- Underline the direct object pronoun in the sentences below.
- Fill in the blanks and the French direct object pronoun.

a. John sends them.

Jean \_\_\_\_\_ envoie.

b. He meets her at school.

Il \_\_\_\_\_ rencontre à l'école.

c. He likes her.

Il \_\_\_\_\_ aime.

d. Mary likes the book and she reads it. (to read → **lire**)

ANTECEDENT IN ENGLISH: \_\_\_\_\_

GENDER OF ANTECEDENT IN FRENCH: masculine

Marie aime le livre et elle \_\_\_\_\_ lit.

e. He makes soup and he eats it. (to eat → **manger**)

ANTECEDENT IN ENGLISH: \_\_\_\_\_

GENDER OF ANTECEDENT IN FRENCH: feminine

Il fait de la soupe et il \_\_\_\_\_ mange.