6.2 Indirect object pronouns

In Lección 5, you learned that a direct object receives the action of the verb directly. In contrast, an indirect object receives the action of the verb indirectly.

\[ \text{SUBJECT} \rightarrow \text{I.O. PRONOUN} \rightarrow \text{VERB} \rightarrow \text{DIRECT OBJECT} \rightarrow \text{INDIRECT OBJECT} \]

Roberto \( \text{le} \) presta cien pesos a Luisa.

Roberto \( \text{le} \) lends 100 pesos to Luisa.

An indirect object is a noun or pronoun that answers the question \textit{to whom} or \textit{for whom} an action is done. In the preceding example, the indirect object answers this question:

¿A quién le presta Roberto cien pesos? To whom does Roberto lend 100 pesos?

### Indirect object pronouns

#### Singular forms

- me (to, for) \textit{me}
- te (to, for) \textit{you} (fam.)
- le (to, for) \textit{you} (form.)
- (to, for) \textit{him; her}

#### Plural forms

- nos (to, for) \textit{us}
- os (to, for) \textit{you} (fam.)
- les (to, for) \textit{you}
- (to, for) \textit{them}

#### ¡Atención! The forms of indirect object pronouns for the first and second persons \( (\text{me, te, nos, os}) \) are the same as the direct object pronouns. Indirect object pronouns agree in number with the corresponding nouns, but not in gender.

- Acabo de mostrárselas que si sabemos regatear.

### Using indirect object pronouns

- Spanish speakers commonly use both an indirect object pronoun and the noun to which it refers in the same sentence. This is done to emphasize and clarify to whom the pronoun refers.

  \[ \text{I.O. PRONOUN} \rightarrow \text{INDIRECT OBJECT} \rightarrow \text{I.O. PRONOUN} \rightarrow \text{INDIRECT OBJECT} \]

  - Ella \text{le} vende la ropa \text{a Elena}.
  - Les prestamos el dinero \text{a Inés y Álex}.

- Indirect object pronouns are also used without the indirect object noun when the person for whom the action is being done is known.

  - Ana \text{le} presta la falda \text{a Elena}.
  - También \text{le} presta unos jeans.
  - Ana lends her skirt to Elena.
  - \text{She also lends her a pair of jeans}.
Indirect object pronouns are usually placed before the conjugated form of the verb. In negative sentences the pronoun is placed between no and the conjugated verb.

Martin **me** compra un regalo.  
*Martin is buying me a gift.*

Eva **no me** escribe cartas.  
*Eva doesn’t write me letters."

When a conjugated verb is followed by an infinitive or the present progressive, the indirect object pronoun may be placed before the conjugated verb or attached to the infinitive or present participle. ¡Atención! When an indirect object pronoun is attached to a present participle, an accent mark is added to maintain the proper stress.

**Él no quiere pagar.**  
*He does not want to pay you.*

**Él está escribiéndole** una postal a ella.  
*He is writing a postcard to her.*

Because the indirect object pronouns **le** and **les** have multiple meanings, Spanish speakers often clarify to whom the pronouns refer with the preposition a + [pronoun] or a + [noun].

**UNCLARIFIED STATEMENTS**
- Yo **le** compro un abrigo.
- Ella **le** describe un libro.

**CLARIFIED STATEMENTS**
- Yo compro un abrigo **a usted/él/ella**.
- Ella describe un libro **a Juan**.

**UNCLARIFIED STATEMENTS**
- Él **les** vende unos sombreros.
- Ellos **les** hablan muy claro.

**CLARIFIED STATEMENTS**
- Él vende unos sombreros **a ustedes/ellos/ellas**.
- Ellos hablan muy claro **a los clientes**.

The irregular verbs **dar** (to give) and **decir** (to say; to tell) are often used with indirect object pronouns.

**The verbs dar and decir**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular forms</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>dar</strong></td>
<td><strong>decir</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yo</td>
<td>doy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tú</td>
<td>das</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ud./él/ella</td>
<td>da</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Me dan** una fiesta cada año.  
*They give (throw) me a party every year.*

**Te digo** la verdad.  
*I’m telling you the truth.*

**Voy a darle** consejos.  
*I’m going to give her advice.*

**No les digo** mentiras a mis padres.  
*I don’t tell lies to my parents.*

**¡INTÉNTALO!**
Use the cues in parentheses to provide the correct indirect object pronoun for each sentence.

1. Juan _______ quiere dar un regalo. (to Elena)
2. María _______ prepara un café. (for us)
3. Beatriz y Felipe _______ escriben desde (from) Cuba. (to me)
4. Marta y yo _______ compran unos guantes. (for them)
5. Los vendedores _______ venden ropa. (to you, fam. sing.)
6. La dependienta _______ muestra los guantes. (to us)