

PRACTICAL GRAMMAR

THE POSITION OF *DIRECT* AND *INDIRECT* OBJECTS

Look at this statement:

We bought **a treadmill**.

↓
direct object

What did we buy? We bought **a treadmill**. In this statement, **a treadmill** is the **direct object** of the verb. Notice that there is no preposition immediately before the direct object.

Now look at another statement:

We bought a treadmill **for Denise**.

↓
indirect object

Who did we buy the treadmill *for*? We bought it **for Denise**. In this statement, **Denise** is the **indirect object** of the verb. Notice that the indirect object is immediately preceded by a preposition.

There are two objects in this statement, a direct object and an indirect object. The direct object comes before the indirect object. When we use this order, the indirect object has to be preceded by a preposition, as we saw above.

We **bought** **a treadmill** *for* **Denise**.

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓
verb direct object preposition indirect object

It is also possible to put the indirect object before the direct object. Notice that when we use this order, no preposition is used:

We **bought** **Denise** **a treadmill**.

↓ ↓ ↓
verb indirect object direct object

Follow this hint:



- The direct object can come before the indirect object. When we use this order, the indirect object has to be preceded by a preposition (usually *to* or *for*):
verb + direct object + preposition + indirect object.
- The indirect object can come before the direct object. When this happens, no preposition is used:
verb + indirect object + direct object.