**Direct Object Pronouns**

The **direct object** is the person or thing that receives the action of the verb in a sentence. To determine the direct object in a sentence, ask yourself the question: Who? or What? **Direct object pronouns** take the place of the direct object nouns. While a noun that is the direct object follows the verb, the **pronoun is instead placed in front of it**, for example: *Tu prends l’avion* (You take the plane), *Tu* ***le*** *prends* (You take it).

**Examples:**

*Est-ce que tu regardes la télé ?* = Do you watch TV?  
*Oui, je* ***la*** *regarde* = Yes, I watch it.  
*Est-ce que tu aimes le professeur ?* = Do you like the teacher?  
*Oui je* ***l’****aime bien* = Yes, I like him.  
*Est-ce que tu* ***m’****amènes chez Rose* ? = Are you taking me to Rose’s?  
*Non, je t’amène chez Karine* = No, I’m taking you to Karine’s!

**The French direct object pronouns are as follows:***Me/m’* = me  
*Te/t’* = you  
*Le/l’* = him, it (masc)  
*La/l’* = her, it (fem)  
*Nous* = us  
*Vous* = you  
*Les* = them

Note: **Me**, **te**, and **le/la** change to **m'**, **t'**, and **l'** in front of a vowel or mute h.  
  
**Indirect Object Pronouns**  
  
**Indirect objects** can only be used for persons and are those people in a sentence to **whom the action** of the verb occurs. You can determine the indirect object by asking yourself the question, “To whom” or sometimes “for whom”. Many of the verbs of communication (parler, écrire, dire, répondre, demander, téléphoner ) take an indirect object.   
I'm talking to **Caroline** = *Je parle à* ***Caroline****.*  
**To whom** am I talking? to **Caroline**.

**The French indirect object pronouns are as follows:**  
  
*Me/m’* = me  
*Te/t’* = you  
*Lui* = him, her  
*Nous* = us  
*Vous* = you  
*Leur* = them

**Note** that it is only in the third person singular and plural where there is any difference between the actual form of direct and indirect object pronouns. It is also important to remember that the indirect object pronoun “lui” can mean either “to him” or “to her”.

Like the direct object pronouns, the indirect object pronouns are placed **in front of the verb**.

**Examples:**

**Est-ce que tu parles à ta voisine ?** = Do you speak to your (female) neighbour?  
**Oui, je *lui* parle !** = Yes, I speak to her!

*Est-ce que vous écrivez un email aux étudiants?* = Are you writing an email to the students?  
*Oui je* ***leur*** *écris des directives* = Yes I’m writing some directions to them.

**Note:** When deciding between direct and indirect objects, the general rule is that if the person is preceded by the preposition “à”, that person is an indirect object.

**Tonic Pronouns**

**Tonic pronouns** are used for emphasis and in some special situations. They always refer to a **person**.

They are used mainly:  
• after prepositions such as: *sans* (without), *pour* (for), *dans* (inside), *après* (after), *chez* (at someone’s place), *avec* (with), *devant* (in front), etc…  
• when you have a double subject (*Paul et moi allons au cinéma ce soir* = Paul and I are going to the cinema this evening.)  
• after the preposition “*à*” in many expressions (*être* à indicating possession, *faire attention à*, *penser à* – *Ce stylo est à moi* = This pen is mine, *C’est très gentil de penser à nous* = That’s very nice to think about us)  
• alone in answer to a question or for emphasis (*Qui est là ?* Moi ! = Who’s there ? Me ! *Lui, il est vraiment con !* = He is really stupid)  
• together with “-*même”* (*moi-même* = myself, *lui-même* = himself)   
• after *c’est* and *ce sont*: (*Ce sont eux qui sont venus ici* = They are the ones who came here.)  
• with the negative adverb *ne… que* and conjunction *ne… ni… ni* : (*Je ne prends qu’elle dans mon équipe !* = I’m only taking her in my team!)

**The tonic pronouns are as follows:**  
  
*Moi* = me  
*Toi* = you  
*Lui* = him  
*Elle* = her  
*Soi* = one  
*Nous* = us  
*Vous* = you  
*Eux* = them (masc)  
*Elles* = them (fem.)  
  
**Note** that with the tonic pronouns, you must distinguish between masculine and feminine in the third person singular and plural

**Examples:**  
*Tu viens chez moi ?* = You’re coming to my place?  
*Non, je vais chez elle !* = No, I’m going to her place!  
*J’achète ce livre pour toi !* = I’m buying this book for you !  
*Attention ! Devant toi, il y a une voiture !* = Careful! In front of you there is a car!  
*Je suis vraiment bête, moi !* = I’m really stupid!  
*Cette voiture est à vous, monsieur ?* = Is this your car, sir ?  
  
*Céline Anthonioz*

**SUMMARY TABLE OF INDIRECT/DIRECT AND TONIQUE PRONOUNS**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Subject | Direct Object | **Indirect pronouns** | **Tonique pronouns** |
| **je** | **me** | **Me** | **moi** |
| **tu** | **te** | **Te** | **toi** |
| **il  elle  on** | **le  la** | **Lui** | **lui  elle  soi** |
| **nous** | **nous** | **Nous** | **nous** |
| **vous** | **vous** | **Vous** | **vous** |
| **ils  elles** | **les** | **Leur** | **eux  elles** |