



Indirect Object Pronouns

Indirect Object Pronouns in Italian

What is an indirect object pronoun? Well to answer that let's first look at an indirect object in a sentence. We know that a verb represents an action or some type of state of being. We also know that the subject is the doer of that action or the one "being" something. As a result the subject pronouns are a type of subject. They are a subject where one word (the pronoun) has been used in place of a noun (a person, place or thing). The direct object is the direct recipient of the verb and can be identified by asking who or what. In contrast, an indirect object receives the action of the verb indirectly (through a preposition) and can be identified by asking the question [to or for whom] or [to or for what]. Here are a few examples (for the sake of clarity and having a visible subject in the sentence, I am also including subject pronouns);

Io scrivo a Pietro. - I write to Peter.

[to or for whom] or [to or for what] do I write? "Peter". Peter is the indirect object.

Tu compri un regalo per tuo papa. - Buy a gift for your Dad.

[to or for whom] or [to or for what] do you buy? "Dad". Dad is the indirect object.

Lui dà il libro a Maria. - He gives the book to Maria.

[to or for whom] or [to or for what] does he give? "Maria". Maria is the indirect object.

Now all we have to do is replace the indirect object nouns with indirect object pronouns and look at how to use them.

This chart shows the basic indirect object pronouns

Italian Indirect Object Pronouns		
Weak form	Strong form	English
mi	a/per me	to/for me
ti	a/per te	to/for you
gli/le/Le	a/per lui/lei/Lei	to/for him/her/it
ci	a/per noi	to/for us
vi	a/per voi	to/for you all
(gli)	a/per loro/Loro	to/for them

How to use the Italian indirect object pronoun!

The weak form of the indirect object pronoun is usually found in 1 of 3 places. First, it is found just before the verb, secondly it is found attached to the end of an infinitive verb and third it is found attached to the end of a conjugated verb in certain instances. In short the placement is much like that of the weak form of the direct object pronoun. We will start by looking at it appearing just before the verb.



Io scrivo a Pietro. - I write to Peter.
Gli scrivo. - I write to him.
Tu compri un regalo per tuo papa. - Buy a gift for your Dad.
Gli compri un regalo. - Buy a gift for him.
Lui dà il libro a Maria. - He gives the book to Maria.
Le dà il libro. - He gives her the book.

Here are a few more examples.

Ci danno qualche cibo? - Are they giving us some food?
Ti telefonerò domani. - I will call you tomorrow.
vi parliamo. - We are speaking to you all.
Non ti manderò niente. - I will not send you anything.
Le spiego i preposizioni - I am explaining the prepositions to her.

Now let's look at a couple of instances when an indirect object pronoun is being attached to the end of an infinitive.

There are many instances where we have an infinitive verb in our phrases such as when we use modal verbs like *volere*, *dovere* or *potere* and also in various subjunctive clauses where the subject is the same in both clauses.

Vuole parlarci. - He wants to speak to us.
Spero di spiegarti perché non sono a casa. - I hope to explain to you why I'm at home.
Devi darmi quello! - You have to give me that.

The third method for the weak form is attaching it to a conjugated verb. The weak form of the indirect object pronoun is attached to the end of the conjugated verb that it is used with in the imperative tense. Here are a few examples;

Parlami! - Speak to me!
Telefonagli! - Call him!
Spiegaci! - Explain to us!

And finally let's take a look at the strong form of the indirect object pronoun which can be used to add emphasis to that indirect object and/or can be used for stylistic reasons.

Parleranno a me. - They will talk to me.
Offri un caffè a loro. - Offer them a coffee
Voglio dare questo libro a te! - I want to give this book to you!