

## Indirect object pronouns

Indirect object pronouns are somewhat different than direct object pronouns because indirect object pronouns are used even when the actual indirect object is stated.

Table 1 lists the indirect object pronouns in the same order as the subject and direct object pronouns were presented earlier.

**TABLE 1 Spanish Indirect Object Pronouns**

<i>Person</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
First person (masculine and feminine)	<i>me</i> (me)	<i>nos</i> (us)
Second person (masculine and feminine)	<i>te</i> (you)	<i>os</i> (you)
Third person (masculine and feminine)	<i>le</i> (him, her)	<i>les</i> (them)

English pronouns are the same for both indirect and direct objects. You can see that most of the Spanish indirect object pronouns look exactly like direct object pronouns except for the third person. There is no differentiation between the masculine indirect object pronoun *him* and the feminine *her*. The pronoun *le* is used as the indirect object pronoun for both genders.

Because the pronoun *le* is so vague, a clarification can be placed either at the beginning of the sentence or after the verb to indicate the gender or even the specific person. To create a clarification, the preposition *a* is followed by a subject pronoun. *A él, a ella, or a usted* can be used to clarify the pronoun *le*, or any noun can be used after the preposition *a* to specify exactly whom the indirect object is.

The pronoun *les* has the same problem, so if it's necessary to clarify the gender of “them” or to specify “you guys,” use the same method of clarification by adding *a* in front of the subject pronoun as in *a ellos, a ellas, or a ustedes*.

## Indirect object pronoun placement

In the following sample sentences, the actual indirect object and the indirect object pronoun are both in bold print because they both refer to the same thing. But unlike direct objects, you do not have to eliminate the indirect object to require a pronoun. You must use an indirect object pronoun any time there is an indirect object, but you may choose to use only the indirect object pronoun if the actual indirect object is clear. The indirect object pronoun is placed before the conjugated verb or attached to an infinitive like a direct object. The clarification is provided in Spanish by using the preposition *a* + *noun* or *personal subject pronoun*.

<i>Juan <b>le</b> da un diamante a su novia.</i>	Juan gives a diamond to his girlfriend.
<i>Juan <b>le</b> da <b>a ella</b> un diamante</i>	Juan gives <b>her</b> a diamond. ( <b>a ella</b> is used to clarify that <b>le</b> refers to <b>her</b> ).

<i>Juan le da un diamante.</i>	Juan gives <b>her</b> a diamond. (it must have been already established that <b>le</b> refers to <b>her</b> )
<i>Amanda le trae la comida ( a su abuelo.)</i>	Amanda brings <b>her grandfather</b> the meal.
<i>Amanda le trae la comida a él.</i>	Amanda brings <b>him</b> the meal. ( a <b>él</b> clarifies that <b>le</b> refers to <b>him</b> )
<i>Amanda le trae la comida.</i>	Amanda brings <b>him</b> the meal. (only when no clarification is necessary)
<i>Ricardo les enseña la lección a los estudiantes.</i>	Ricardo teaches <b>the students</b> the lesson.
<i>Ricardo les enseña la lección.</i>	Ricardo teaches <b>them</b> the lesson.
<i>Yo siempre les digo la verdad a mis hermanas.</i>	I always tell <b>my sisters</b> the truth.
<i>Yo siempre les digo la verdad a ellas.</i>	I always tell <b>them (feminine)</b> the truth. (to specify <b>them</b> refers to all girls)
<i>Yo siempre les digo la verdad.</i>	I always tell <b>them</b> the truth. (the gender of <b>them</b> doesn't matter)
<i>Roberto compra un coche par a ustedes.</i>	Robert buys a car for <b>you guys</b> .

Notice in the previous examples that you can use the indirect object pronoun without the actual indirect object stated or you can use the indirect object pronoun along with the actual indirect object.

## Special verbs with indirect object pronouns

There are a few special verbs that work in conjunction with an indirect object pronoun to create an idiomatic expression that is quite common in Spanish as well as its English equivalent. See if you know the meanings of the following sentences.

- *Me gusta la pizza*
- *Te gustan los libros*
- *Nos gusta la música*
- *Le gusta bailar*

You probably translate the first sentence “I like pizza” and you are correct. “I like” is the idiomatic expression used in English to express “*me gusta*” but in reality, the verb *gustar* means to please, and the Spanish expression states “Pizza pleases me.” It's easier to use the verb *gustar* correctly if you understand that it doesn't exactly mean “like” even though you translate it that way. When you learn the patterns of sentences with the verb *gustar*, you will also be able to use

the list of verbs that follow, because they are all verbs that are used in sentences exactly like *gustar*.

These sentences are tricky, because the English version uses a subject pronoun and the Spanish version uses an indirect object pronoun. Try reading the Spanish sentence backward and it will be more like the English version.

<i>Me gusta la pizza.</i>	Pizza pleases me. = I like pizza.
<i>Te gustan los libros.</i>	The books please you. = You like books.
<i>Nos gusta la música.</i>	The music pleases us. = We like the music.
<i>Le gusta bailar.</i>	Dancing pleases him. = He likes to dance.

Because the pronoun *le* is so vague, a clarification can be placed either at the beginning of the sentence or after *gustar* to indicate the gender or even the specific person who is pleased. To create a clarification, use the preposition *a* followed by a subject pronoun. *A él, a ella, or a usted* can be used to clarify the pronoun *le*.

<i>A ella le gusta la pizza.</i>	Pizza pleases her. = She likes pizza.
<i>A él le gusta comer.</i>	Eating pleases him. = He likes to eat.
<i>A usted le gusta el restaurante.</i>	The restaurant pleases you. = You like the restaurant.

The pronoun *les* has the same problem, so if it is necessary to clarify the gender of “them” or to specify “you guys,” use the same method of clarification by adding *a ellos, a ellas, or a ustedes*.

<i>A ellas les gusta correr.</i>	Running pleases them (feminine). = They (feminine) like to run.
<i>A ustedes les gusta mirar la tele.</i>	Watching TV pleases you guys. = You guys like to watch TV.
<i>a ellos. les gusta el partido</i>	The game pleases them. = They (masculine) like the game.

The indirect object precedes the verb *gustar* to indicate who is pleased. But what makes these sentences stray from the Spanish norm, is that the subject of the sentence, the thing that is doing the pleasing, follows the verb. The verb is still conjugated to go with the subject, but the subject is after the verb. Most often either the *él* or *ellos* form of *gustar* (*gusta*) is used. *Gustan* is used when followed by a plural subject, and *gusta* is used when followed by a singular subject or an infinitive. The indirect object that precedes *gusta* or *gustan* does not affect which form of *gustar* you use. Look carefully at the following examples and notice that *gustar* is conjugated to go with the subject that follows. If there is a clarification of the indirect object after *gustar*, ignore it. The subject follows and determines which form of *gustar* to use.

<i>Le gustan a él las guitarras.</i>	The guitars please him. = He likes the guitars.
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<i>Les gusta el piano.</i>	The piano pleases them. = They like the piano.
<i>A ellos les gusta tocar.</i>	Playing pleases them. = They like to play.
<i>Me gustan los músicos.</i>	Musicians please me. = I like the musicians.

When *gusta* is followed by a verb in its infinitive form, the verb is actually acting like a singular noun called a gerund. In English, a verb that is acting like a noun will have the -ing ending. In Spanish, a verb acting like a singular noun is in its infinitive form. Any time a verb is acting like a noun in Spanish the infinitive form is used instead of the present participle, which is called a gerund in English when used as a noun.

- Soccer is fun. Playing is fun.

Both *soccer* and *playing* are singular nouns.

- El fútbol es divertido. Jugar es divertido.

Both *fútbol* and *jugar* are singular nouns.

So when an infinitive is used as the subject after *gustar*, the *él* form *gusta* is appropriate.

<i>Nos gusta el fútbol.</i>	Soccer pleases us. = We like soccer.
<i>Nos gusta jugar.</i>	Playing pleases us. = We like to play.

There are several verbs in Spanish that are used exactly like *gustar*.

Source:

<http://www.cliffsnotes.com/WileyCDA/CliffsReviewTopic/Indirect-Objects-Indirect-Object-Pronouns.topicArticleId-23932,articleId-23890.html>