

## What is a direct object?

A direct object is the thing that receives the action. Look at the following example:

J'ai lu vos lettres.

Vous avez écrit les lettres que j'ai lues.

In the sentence, "the letter" is the direct object because it is receiving the action of being read.

To find the direct object in a sentence, ask the question Who? or What?

I see **Pierre**.

Je vois **Pierre**.

**Who** do I see? **Pierre**.

**La personne que j'ai vue** était Pierre (agreement because la personne is feminine)

I'm eating the **bread**

Je mange **le pain**.

**What** am I eating? - **Bread**.

**Le pain** que j'ai mangé\_ (no agreement because pain is masculine)

## Agreement of the past participle with "avoir":

Past participles that take the auxiliary verb avoir sometimes agree (in gender and number) with the direct object of the verb, depending where the latter is put:

- If the direct object comes **BEFORE** the past participle, then the latter must **AGREE** with the object.
- If the direct object comes **AFTER** the past participle, then the latter **DOESN'T AGREE** with the object.

With reference to the example above about the letters, the first sentence "J'ai lu vos lettres" the past participle does not agree with the object because it comes after the verb. In the second sentence, "Vous avez écrit les lettres que j'ai lues", the past participle **DOES AGREE** with the direct object because it comes **BEFORE** the verb.

Remember the the indicator word is "QUE". If que is not in the sentence, odds are the past participle (when conjugated with avoir) does not agree.

Examples:

1. J'ai tué la vache que l'on m'a donnée (the object, vache, comes before the verb a donné and therefore the past participle takes an extra -e to agree with the feminine vache)
2. On m'a donné la vache.
3. Nous avons vu de belles filles
4. Les filles que nous avons vues étaient belles.

What is a direct object and how do you know if it comes before the verb?

Direct objects are the people or things in a sentence which receive the action of the verb.