

Ditransitive verbs in English

Most verbs can be used with *to* plus the indirect object (i.e., the object is affected by the action).

For example: *He brought me the paper = He brought the paper to me.*

These verbs are unmarked.

Verbs marked as follows conform to different patterns:

* = The verb takes *for* + the indirect object (i.e., the object is the beneficiary)

For example: *He built me a house = He built a house for me.*

† = The verb cannot be used with *for* or *to* plus the indirect object.

For example: *It cost me \$5* cannot be rephrased as *It cost \$5 to / for me.*

| Verb | Example |
|------------|---|
| accord | <i>They accorded him the power to rule</i> |
| afford | <i>The terrace afforded them beautiful views</i> |
| *allocate | <i>They allocated us three seats</i> (also <i>to</i> plus the indirect object) |
| allow | <i>She allowed them three questions each</i> |
| ask | <i>I asked her a question</i> (<i>to</i> plus the indirect object is rare) |
| assign | <i>They assigned him a bodyguard</i> (also <i>for</i> plus the indirect object) |
| award | <i>She awarded him first prize</i> |
| *bake | <i>They baked me a cake</i> |
| bequeath | <i>She bequeathed her children the money</i> |
| †bet | <i>He bet me £5</i> |
| bring | <i>He brought me the paper</i> |
| *build | <i>He built me a house</i> |
| *buy | <i>She bought me a drink</i> |
| †call | <i>She called me a liar</i> |
| *catch | <i>The children caught us some fish for supper</i> |
| *cause | <i>The snow caused us problems</i> |
| †charge | <i>They charged us too much money</i> |
| chuck | <i>Chuck me that pen, please</i> |
| *cook | <i>I cooked her dinner</i> |
| †consider | <i>I considered her a friend</i> |
| *construct | <i>She constructed the dogs a kennel</i> |
| †cost | <i>It cost me \$5</i> |
| *cut | <i>They cut us a piece of cake</i> |
| deal | <i>He dealt them the cards</i> |
| deny | <i>She denied me her help</i> |
| *design | <i>He designed me a house</i> |
| *dig | <i>They dug him a grave</i> |
| †*do | <i>They did me a disservice</i> (with <i>favour</i> , the verb can be used with <i>for</i> + the indirect object) |
| *draw | <i>She drew me a picture</i> |
| drop | <i>He dropped me a line</i> |
| *earn | <i>He earned the team six points</i> |
| email | <i>She emailed me the complaint</i> |
| envy | <i>I envy you the experience</i> |
| fax | <i>She faxed me the invoice</i> |
| feed | <i>She fed the tortoise some lettuce</i> |
| *find | <i>She found me my keys</i> |
| †fine | <i>The court fined him £500</i> |

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| find | <i>I found them the money (also for plus the indirect object)</i> |
| *get | <i>They got me the money</i> |
| give | <i>She gave me the book</i> |
| grant | <i>They granted her the degree</i> |
| guarantee | <i>They guaranteed her the house</i> |
| hand | <i>He handed me the letter</i> |
| lease | <i>They leased me the house</i> |
| leave (1) | <i>Her uncle left her the money when he died</i> |
| *leave (2) | <i>He left me his keys</i> |
| lend | <i>He lent me his car</i> |
| loan | <i>They loaned me a car</i> |
| lob | <i>He lobbed me the ball</i> |
| †lose | <i>The mistake lost me the game</i> |
| mail | <i>He mailed her the money</i> |
| †make (1) | <i>They made her the boss</i> |
| *make (2) | <i>I made her dinner</i> |
| †make out | <i>They made him out a liar</i> |
| *mix | <i>I mixed him a drink</i> |
| †name | <i>He named him his successor</i> |
| offer | <i>I offered her the choice</i> |
| *order | <i>She ordered him dinner</i> |
| owe | <i>I owe you an apology</i> |
| *paint | <i>She painted him a picture</i> |
| pass | <i>He passed her the salt</i> |
| †permit | <i>I permitted them no questions</i> |
| *play | <i>She played them a sonata</i> |
| post | <i>They posted me the plans</i> |
| *pour | <i>She poured me a drink</i> |
| *prepare | <i>They prepared us a feast</i> |
| *prescribe | <i>The doctor prescribed her some medicine</i> |
| *print | <i>I printed them a copy</i> |
| promise | <i>They promised me the money</i> |
| provide | <i>I provided them the money (also for plus the indirect object)</i> |
| quote | <i>I quoted him the paragraph</i> |
| read | <i>I read the children a story</i> |
| †refuse | <i>I refused them the option</i> |
| rent | <i>I rented her a car (also for plus the indirect object)</i> |
| reserve | <i>Can you reserve me a table? (also for plus the indirect object)</i> |
| *roll | <i>I rolled her a cigarette</i> |
| *save | <i>The idea saved me some money</i> |
| sell | <i>I sold her my old computer</i> |
| send | <i>I sent her the money</i> |
| serve | <i>He served them champagne (also for plus the indirect object)</i> |
| *set | <i>They set them a test</i> |
| show | <i>I showed her the house</i> |
| †spare | <i>He spared me the trouble</i> |
| supply | <i>They supplied them the equipment (also for plus the indirect object)</i> |
| take | <i>I took her the book (also for plus the indirect object)</i> |
| teach | <i>He taught me the language</i> |

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| tell | <i>We told the police the truth</i> |
| text | <i>She texted me his number</i> |
| throw | <i>He threw me the ball</i> |
| toss | <i>He tossed me the ball</i> |
| *wash | <i>I washed him a shirt</i> |
| will | <i>He willed her the house</i> |
| *win | <i>The goal won them the game</i> |
| †wish | <i>She wished me good luck</i> |
| write | <i>I wrote him an email</i> |

Notes:

1. Some of the uses above are unusual but possible and there are some omissions, usually of verbs which are near synonyms of verbs in this list such as *I boiled / scrambled / fried her an egg* which are too rare to be included.
2. A few verbs can also be used with *for* plus the indirect object when the recipient is the beneficiary. For example, *I wrote an email for him* which implies that he was unable to write it himself. These are not noted because no ordinary arrangement of objects is available. *I wrote him an email* would normally only imply *I wrote an email to him*.
When it is noted that some verbs can also take the *for*-formulation, the reason is usually that the indirect object is the recipient rather than being affected by the action. Compare, e.g., *I took the book to her* and *I took the book for her*.
3. Some polysemous verbs are noted and appear twice with different meanings. Others include idiomatic expressions such as *We threw him a party* which can be re-phrased as *We threw a party for him* although the *to*-formulation is normal with this verb.
4. With the exception of *make out* multi-word verbs are not included although, for example, *protect from*, *admit to* (in the sense of *allow entry*), *pass up*, *hand over*, *talk through*, *thank for*, *give out* and *walk over* are potentially ditransitive. The patterns such verbs follow are not analogous to those suggested in this list.