

Double-object pronoun order: RID

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FUNCTION	To indicate the placement order for two object pronouns in a sentence: reflexive, indirect, direct
SPANISH PLACEMENT	Immediately before the conjugated verb OR attached directly to the infinitive verb, but always in the same order
ENGLISH EQUIVALENTS	Expressions such as "it to me," "them for yourself," "it for myself," "them for you"

The following chart is a review of the reflexive, indirect, and direct object pronouns.

REFLEXIVE		INDIRECT		DIRECT	
me	nos	me	nos	me	nos
te	os	te	os	te	os
se	se	le	les	lo, la	los, las

RID order

When you have two object pronouns in a sentence, these pronouns always appear in RID order: *reflexive, indirect, direct*. Because the maximum number of pronouns that can appear together is two, the possible combinations are reflexive + indirect (which is rare), reflexive + direct, and indirect + direct. Some examples of the more common combinations are shown below.

Reflexive + Direct

Me lo compro.
Tu pelo es magnífico.
¿Te lo lavas mucho?

I buy it for myself.
Your hair is wonderful.
Do you wash it a lot?

Indirect + Direct

Ellos os los envían.
Yo te la escribo.
Ella me las vende.

They send them to you.
I write it to you.
She sells them to me.

Traducción Unless marked [f.], it and them are masculine.
Use the second-person singular Spanish form for English you.

1. He gives it to me. _____
2. She tells it to you. _____
3. We give it to you. _____
4. I write it [f.] to you. _____
5. He sends them to us. _____
6. We sing it [f.] to you. _____
7. Why do you give it to me? _____
8. Who has it for you? _____
9. When do you do it for me? _____
10. Why do you tell it to us? _____
11. I prepare it [f.] for myself. _____
12. She buys them [f.] for herself. _____

The “la la” rule

The third-person forms of both the direct and indirect object pronouns, regardless of number or gender, begin with the letter *l*. When they appear together, change the indirect object pronoun *le* (the first pronoun) to *se*. This avoids the singsong, tongue-tripping sound of two small words together starting with the letter *l*. We call this the “la la rule.”

Consider the sentence “I give it [*m.*] to him.” The indirect object is “him” (*le*) and the direct object is “it” (*lo*). Thus in Spanish we would initially have **Yo le lo doy**. Because of the “la la” rule, however, we change the indirect object pronoun *le* to *se*, and the resulting sentence is **Yo se lo doy**.

This change in spelling to accommodate ease of pronunciation could make such a sentence incomprehensible. However, we use pronouns only when their antecedents are understood from the context of the paragraph or conversation. Therefore, while looking at **se lo doy** without any prior knowledge might make the sentence virtually meaningless, knowledge of the referents makes the sentence completely understandable.

Tú conoces a Juan. Mejor **se lo** dices tú.
Tenemos muchos lápices que no
necesitamos. **Se los** damos.
Los padres de Enrique lo miman. Si él
quiere una bicicleta, ellos **se la**
compran.
A mi mamá le fascinan los chocolates.
Por eso, **se los** envío.

*You know Juan. It's better if you tell it to him.
We have a lot of pencils we don't need.
We give them to you [sing., formal].
Enrique's parents spoil him. If he wants a bicycle,
they buy it for him.*
*My mother loves chocolates. That's why I send
them to her.*

Traducción Unless marked [f.], it and them are masculine. Use the second-person singular Spanish form for English you unless indicated otherwise.

1. He sings it [f.] to her. _____
2. We tell it to them. _____
3. You buy them for him. _____
4. I write it for you [pl., formal]. _____
5. He sends them to them. _____
6. I tell it to her. _____
7. He sells it [f.] to her. _____
8. You give them [f.] to him. _____
9. No one tells it to her. _____
10. Why do you tell it to him? _____
11. We bring them [f.] to them [f.]. _____
12. She cooks it for them. _____
13. I make them [f.] for you [pl., formal]. _____
14. Do you make them for them? _____
15. Who gives it to them? _____

Two pronouns in a negative statement

In a negative sentence or clause in which the RID rules apply, place the word “no” (or other word of negation) immediately before the first pronoun. In the examples below, note the effect of the “la” rule, and watch for sentences like these in the exercises that follow.

No te lo tengo.
 No se los tengo.
 Nunca se la compran.
 No nos las vendemos.

*I don't have it for you.
 I don't have them for them.
 They never buy it for her.
 We don't sell them to ourselves.*

Traducción Unless marked [f.], it and them are masculine. Use the second-person singular Spanish form for English you unless indicated otherwise.

1. She doesn't tell it to me. _____
2. I don't tell it to him. _____
3. We don't buy them [f.] for ourselves. _____

4. *They don't send it [f.] to us on time (a tiempo).*

5. *She doesn't make it for us every day.* _____
6. *I don't give it [f.] to them.* _____
7. *He doesn't pay me for it in cash (en efectivo).*

8. *He doesn't give it to me on time.* _____
9. *Why don't you send it [f.] to her tomorrow?*

10. *Don't you buy them [f.] for them every day?*

11. *I never buy them for myself.* _____
12. *We never tell them to her.* _____

Two pronouns in sentences with two verbs

In a statement or clause that contains two verbs, the first verb is conjugated and the second one remains in the infinitive form. The placement of the two object pronouns follows the same pattern that has been seen with individual pronouns. The object pronouns—kept together—may either be placed before the conjugated verb or attached directly to the infinitive. In addition, they always appear in RID order: reflexive, indirect, direct.

In these examples, the two pronouns are placed before the conjugated verb.

me las quiere entregar
nos los debe vender
se lo podemos mostrar

*he wants to give **them to me***
*he ought to sell **them to us***
*we can show **it to them***

Note that the “la la” rule comes into play in third-person situations.

When the two object pronouns are attached directly to the infinitive, a written accent must be added in order for the infinitive to retain its natural stress, which always falls on the final syllable. Therefore, a written accent is placed over the vowel in the stressed syllable of the infinitive.

entregar + me + las > **entregármelas**
vender + nos + los > **vendérselos**
mostrar + se + lo > **mostrárselo**

*to give **them to me***
*to sell **them to us***
*to show **it to them***

Te lo quiero dar. }
Quiero dártelo. }

I want to give it to you.

Se lo queremos decir. }
Queremos decírselo. }

We want to say it to him.

Me la tienes que enviar. }
Tienes que enviármela. }

You have to send it to me.

Os lo necesitáis poner. }
Necesitáis ponérselo. }

You need to put it on yourselves.

9. *You [pl., formal] have to give it [f.] to us.*

10. *I should bring it to them.*

11. *They should bring them [f.] to me.*

12. *She wants to sing it [f.] for us.*

13. *You can send it to me by mail (por correo).*

14. *He can pay you for it [f.] in cash.*

15. *I want to pay you [pl., informal] for them by check (con un cheque).*

Questions and negative statements with two verbs

In a negative sentence with two verbs, place the word “no” (or other word of negation) before the conjugated verb. If you also place the pronouns before the conjugated verb, the word “no” precedes the pronouns. If you attach the pronouns to the infinitive, the word “no” immediately precedes the conjugated verb.

For questions, add question marks but maintain the order of the sentence elements (subject and verb).

To add the subject (either a noun or pronoun) to a negative statement or a question, place it at the very beginning of the sentence. It should always be placed before the conjugated verb; it should appear before the “no” if the statement or question is negative.

No **te lo** quiero dejar.
No quiero **dejártelo**.

}

I don't want to leave it for you.

No **se lo** tenemos que **comprar**.
No tenemos que **comprárselo**.

}

We don't have to buy it for him.

Ella se lo puede hacer. }
Ella puede hacérselo. }
Ustedes nos lo pueden esconder. }
Ustedes pueden escondérnoslo. }

She can do it for herself.

You can hide it from us.

EJERCICIO
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Traducción Express each of the following statements in two complete sentences showing the two options for placement of the object pronouns. Unless marked [f.], it and them are masculine. Use the second-person singular Spanish form for English you unless indicated otherwise.

1. *I want to tell it to you.*

2. *I want to buy it [f.] for you.*

3. *You have to give it to me.*

4. *We have to sell them to you.*

5. *We have to sell it to her.*

6. *They should buy them [f.] for you.*

7. *They should buy it for themselves.*

8. *She needs to send it [f.] to me.*
