

Complements: Noun Object Complements

FORM:

subject + verb + direct object + noun
complement

USE:

Noun complements can express events that name or characterize the object.

Common verbs: call, name, declare, label, term, proclaim

We named our first child Nora.

The judge called him a liar.

Noun complements can qualify the object.

Common verbs: believe, find, consider, think

They found London an expensive city.

We consider it a wonderful film.

****“They found London to be an expensive city.” has the same meaning, but doesn’t use the noun object complement structure.**

Noun complements describe characteristics caused by a certain event or action.

Common verbs: appoint, elect, make, crown

The members elected her the president of the organization.

Paul’s actions during the emergency made him a hero.

****Noun object complements** look similar to indirect objects followed by direct objects. The forms are similar but the meanings are different.

	Indirect Object	Direct Object
I called	her	a taxi.
They made	him	a birthday cake.
	Direct Object	Noun Complement
I called	her	a liar.
They made	him	the president.

The numbered sentences below have unclear meanings. One follow-up statement is logical if the sentence has an INDIRECT OBJECT. The other statement is logical if the sentence has a NOUN OBJECT COMPLEMENT. Explain the meanings.

Example: We found Jack a helpful assistant.

- a. Jack's assistant made his job much easier. (*"helpful assistant" is a direct object, referring to another person we found to help Jack*)
 - b. Jack helped us with our work. (*"helpful assistant" is a noun complement: Jack himself is helpful to us*)
1. They called me a waiter.
 - a. I told them I was a customer, not a waiter.
 - b. The waiters were very busy so I had to wait for one to come.
 2. I made my daughter a cake for the costume party.
 - a. The kids all loved eating the chocolate cake.
 - b. It was a little difficult for her to wear the costume all afternoon.
 3. He found his sister a good gardener.
 - a. His sister was happy to pay someone to help in her garden.
 - b. He asked his sister to help him because his garden wasn't doing well.
 4. She called him a doctor.
 - a. He was sick and needed medical care.
 - b. He said that he wasn't a doctor, he was a nurse.