

11. Preceding direct objects

- 1** In compound tenses like the perfect the past participle of *avoir* verbs only takes an agreement if there is a direct object coming before the participle. This is called a **preceding direct object** agreement and is generally only used in more formal writing or speech. A preceding direct object can take several forms:

- 1.1** The **relative pronoun** *que* and the noun it replaces:

Voilà la veste que j'ai **achetée**

Here's the jacket I bought

Les décisions qu'il a **prises** étaient bonnes

The decisions (that) he made were good

- 1.2** Certain **question words**: *lequel, laquelle* etc., *combien* + noun, *quel, quelle* etc. + noun:

Laquelle des deux maisons as-tu **préférée**?

Which of the two houses did you like best?

Combien de feuilles de papier a-t-il **prises**?

How many sheets of paper did he take?

Quelles raisons a-t-il **données**?

What reasons did he give?

- 1.3** The **personal pronouns** *le, la* and *les*, and *me, te, nous, vous* where these act as a direct object:

La lettre? Je l'ai **envoyée** la semaine dernière

The letter? I sent it last week

- Avez-vous vu mes lunettes? - Oui, je les ai **vues** sur la table

- Have you seen my glasses? - Yes, I saw them on the table

As the pronouns *me, te, nous, vous* can be direct or indirect, it is easy to confuse the two and get the wrong p.d.o. agreement:

Elle nous a **donné** [and **not** **donnés*] un conseil

She gave us a piece of advice

Le concert nous a beaucoup **plu** [and **not** **plus*]

We very much enjoyed the concert

Here *donné* and *plu* do not take an agreement because they are both **indirect** (i.e. *donner qch à qn* - to give sb sth, *plaire à qn* - to please sb).