

It is them

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“It is them” is a common mistake by many English speakers, used when referring to a group of people. Don’t make the same mistake. Would you say “es les” in Spanish? No!

So why is it wrong? “Them” is an object pronoun, used when mortals (mortales) are the object of a verb. Consider these examples:

- Mr. Morales gave them a glass of champagne. Or you could write “Mr. Morales gave a glass of champagne to them”. “Them” is the object of the verb, and it is an object pronoun, just as “les” is an object pronoun.

So, why is it such a common mistake? Unthinking minds (mentes irreflexivas), no grammar lessons in many schools, and when people hear mistakes they repeat them, thinking the grammar is correct. Don’t make the same mistake in your Cambridge Advanced and Proficiency exams.

Here are some more examples:

- “It is him speaking”. **Wrong**. This is the correct versión: “it is **he** speaking”.
- “I listen to them” is correct (les escucho a ellos). “Them” is an object of the verb “listen”.
- “It is us who are responsible for the Brexit mess”. **Wrong**. The correct version: “it is **we** who are responsible for the Brexit mess”.

Consider these sentences:

- “It could have been them that caused the problem”. **Wrong.**

“It could have **they** who caused the problem” (podrían haber sido ellos que causaron el problema) is the correct grammar.

Think of this sentence in another way: “they caused the problem”. “They” is the subject pronoun.

Remember that Spanish and Latin rules re subject pronouns are the same.