Do you know what nouns do?

Nouns can be the subject of a sentence- They explain who or what the sentence is about. Since gerunds are nouns, they can also be the subject of the sentence.

Dancing is a great hobby. Dancing is the subject.

Nouns can be the direct object of action verbs- they are the nouns that follow action verbs and get the action of the verb.

I really enjoy unloading oranges. Ask yourself-: What is the verb? Enjoy? Oh, well enjoy is an action verb so I will see if there is a noun getting the action of the verb. What do I enjoy? Unloading oranges. Unloading oranges is the Direct Object. So, Direct Objects follow action verbs only!

Nouns can also be predicate nominatives. A PN is a noun that follows a linking verb and renames the subject. PNs only follow linking verbs!

Her favorite hobby is taking photos. Ask yourself: What is the subject and verb? (Hobby/is) What kind of verb? Linking (no action here) So, taking photos renames the subject hobby-it is a PN.

Nouns can also be objects of a preposition. Prepositional phrases end in nouns or pronouns; therefore, the noun or pronoun that ends a preposition is the OP.

She lives (through shopping at the mall). Through is a preposition, shopping is the object of the preposition.