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We use **reflexive pronouns** when the subject and the object of a sentence are the same. In other words, reflexive pronouns cause the verb to reflect back on the subject.



via <https://faesl.edublogs.org/2017/06/30/reflexive-pronouns/>

In the example, “**I** am teaching **myself** to play the piano.” “I” is the subject of the sentence. “am teaching” is the verb. But, whom am I teaching? The answer is “myself,” an illustration of a reflexive pronoun at work.

We also can use them to add emphasis to various statements.

- Mary likes looking at **herself** in the mirror. (‘herself’ refers to Mary, not to anybody else)
- *Jack and Evelyn built their house **themselves**.* (we emphasize the fact that nobody helped them)

How to form reflexive pronouns

One of the biggest markers for reflexive pronouns is their ending. They always end in ‘**-self**’ or ‘**-selves**’ and refer to a previously-mentioned noun or pronoun.

Reflexive pronouns are formed like this:

Subject pronoun Object pronoun Reflexive pronoun

<i>I</i>	<i>Me</i>	<i>Myself</i>
<i>You</i>	<i>You</i>	<i>Yourself</i>
<i>He</i>	<i>Him</i>	<i>Himself</i>
<i>She</i>	<i>Her</i>	<i>Herself</i>
<i>It</i>	<i>It</i>	<i>Itself</i>
<i>We</i>	<i>Us</i>	<i>Ourselves</i>
<i>You</i>	<i>You</i>	<i>Yourselves</i>
<i>They</i>	<i>Them</i>	<i>Themselves</i>

- *I usually do the cleaning **myself**.*
- *Can you repair this chair **yourself**?*
- *Jane bought **herself** a new pair of shoes.*
- *Jack introduced **himself** to other people at the meeting.*
- *This door locks **itself** after closing.*
- *We must make important decisions **ourselves**.*
- *Be careful, don't cut **yourselves** with those knives.*
- *Old people often talk to **themselves**.*

When to use reflexive pronouns

In many situations we use reflexive pronouns just to emphasize that:

1. the subject is acting upon itself instead of acting upon another object, or
2. to emphasize the importance of the subject.

Consider the following examples:

- *Girls liked **them**.* (they liked someone else)
- *Girls liked **themselves**.* (subject acted upon itself)
- *I do my laundry **myself**, and my mother does not help me.*
- *The movie **itself** was not very good, but the soundtrack was awesome.*
- *The Queen **herself** attended the ceremonial reception.*
- *We could fix the car **ourselves**, but Peter decided to take it to the service.*

When not to use reflexive pronouns

— We don't use reflexive pronouns when two or more subjects perform the same reciprocal action. '**Each other**' is used instead:

Compare:

- *We looked at **each other** with admiration.* (I looked at her, and she looked at me)
- BUT: We looked at **ourselves** in the mirror. (I looked at myself, and she looked at herself)
- *My friends and I are helping **each other** with the homework.*
- *Usually cats and dogs don't like **each other**.*
- *Children gave **each other** apples and ate them with pleasure.*

— We don't use a reflexive pronoun after verbs which describe things people usually do for themselves, such as **wash, shave, dress or feel**:

- *He washed [~~himself~~] in cold water.*
- *He always shaved [~~himself~~] before going out in the evening.*

Check out this video from SmartLearningVideos explaining the meaning and usage of reflexive pronouns:

See also:

[Personal Pronouns: Subject and Object](#)

[Indefinite Pronouns](#)