



## 12. REFLEXIVE PRONOUN

# A Reflexive Pronoun-

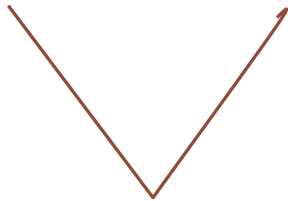
- shows that a person or thing does(did) something to himself or itself.

E.g. He hurt himself.

She cooks the food herself.

- is an object that refers back to the subject. (so the subject and the object are one and the same)

E.g. I saw it myself.



same reference

# USING A REFLEXIVE PRONOUN

## With prepositions

- some prepositions take them but some others don't.
- Not usually used with prepositions that show a spatial relationship. In such cases a personal pronoun is preferred.

E.g. I kept it next to *myself*.



I kept it next to *me*.

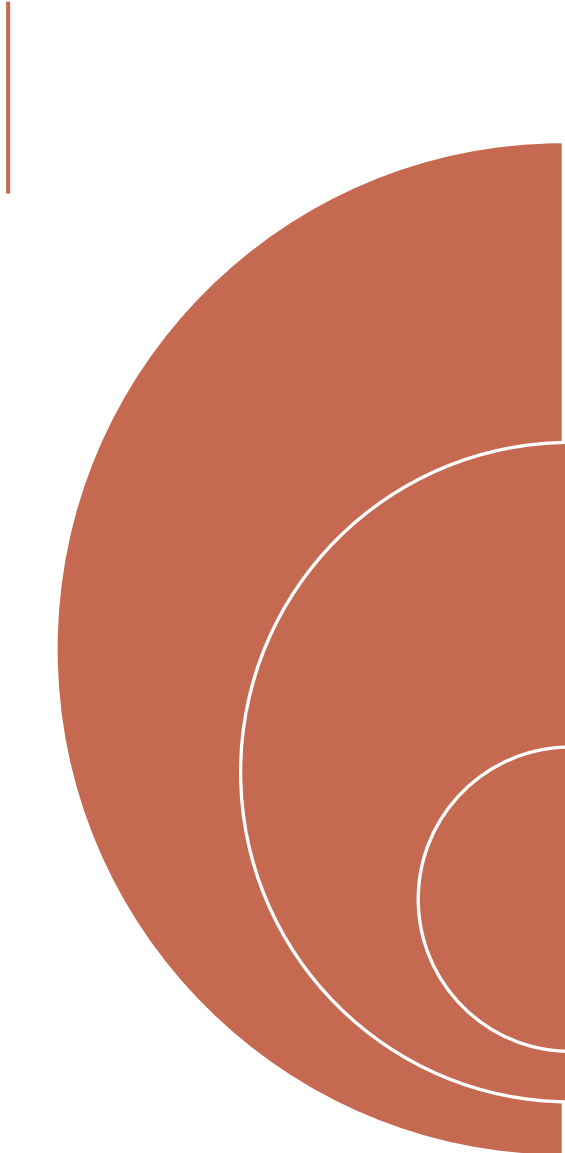


- Obligatory with figurative spatial relation.

E.g. She was *beyond herself* with joy.

- Not used when it is obvious which person is meant.

E.g. *She* took her daughter with *her*. (*not herself*)



**Sometimes a reflexive pronoun is not used even when the action of the verb is performed upon the subject, especially those that people habitually perform such as dress, shave, wash, relax etc. We usually never say, 'The boy washes himself daily' or 'I get myself up every morning'**

**If ever a reflexive pronoun is used after these verbs, it indicates a slight change in meaning.**

**E.g. The boy is old enough to wash himself. (indicates an ability)**

If a verb has a reflexive pronoun as the object in a sentence, there can be no passive form.

E.g. She hurt herself. ( no passivation is possible as there is co-reference between the subject and the object)

■ Verbs like amuse, enjoy, revenge, avail, hurt, injure, familiarize, behave, absent and pride require reflexive pronouns. Some of them always; but some others when there is no object.

■ Always use 'avail' with a reflexive pronoun after it.

E.g. Please **avail yourself** of the free Wi-Fi.

■ 'Enjoy' can be used with or without an object after it.

E.g. They **enjoyed themselves** at the beach.

We **enjoyed** the party.

## The emphatic use of reflexive pronoun

- Sometimes used with a noun to show that nobody or nothing else was present other than the person or the thing mentioned in the sentence.
- An emphatic reflexive receives the main stress of the sentence.
- e.g. The Principal **himself** visited us.

## Is it right to use a reflexive pronoun in the place of a personal pronoun?

- Well, its ungrammatical but very much popular in usage.
- Such expressions are very common that it cannot be kept as ungrammatical.
- E.g. Ravi and **myself** are good friends since school. ( the personal pronoun **I** is desirable here)

The parcel was given to **himself**. (**him** is preferred here)



# IDIOMATIC USE OF REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS

1. By itself- automatically

E.g. The laptop turned off automatically.

2. In itself- considering the only thing specified

E.g. The process was futile in itself.

3. To feel oneself- to find oneself in the normal state of health.

E.g. I'm starting to feel like myself again.

4. (All) by oneself- alone

E.g. She lived all by herself after the divorce.

5. Behave oneself- to behave politely

E.g. He didn't behave himself at the party.

Using 'itself' after sentences is not good English though it is quite popular in Indian English. 'Even' would be better in such cases.

E.g. I want it now itself. (incorrect)