

REFLEXIVE VERBS

In English grammar, the word *reflexive* refers to a construction in which the subject of the sentence both performs and receives the action of the verb. The action is “*reflected*” back to the subject. Study these examples of verbs used reflexively and non-reflexively.

NOT REFLEXIVE

I cut the meat with the knife.
 Did you hurt her feelings?
 The girl drove the car to school.
We dressed the baby.
 Did you all see the movie on t.v.?
 The children wash the dog.

REFLEXIVE

I cut **myself** with the knife.
 Did you hurt **yourself**?
 The girl drove **herself** to school.
We dressed **ourselves**.
 Did you all see **yourselves** on t.v.?
 The children wash **themselves**.

Note the use of the reflexive pronouns (myself, yourself, etc.) in the second group.

Spanish also has reflexive verbs – in fact, Spanish uses the reflexive construction much more than English does. The reflexive verbs are easily recognized because the infinitive form has the reflexive pronoun *se* attached.

llamarse – to call oneself (to be named) (Yo) me llamo My name is. (lit. call myself)
 lavarse – to wash oneself (to bathe) Ellos se lavan They bathe. (lit. wash themselves)

Study the table showing the reflexive pronouns. Recall that *me*, *te*, *os* and *nos* are the same forms for the reflexive as for direct and indirect object pronouns.

subject pronouns		reflexive pronouns	self or selves	bañarse – to take a bath
yo	I	me	myself	me baño
tú	you	te	yourself	te bañas
él ella usted	he she you	se	himself herself yourself	se baña
nosotros nosotras	we	nos	ourselves	nos bañamos
vosotros vosotras	you (pl.) familiar	os	yourselves (pl) familiar	os bañáis
ellos ellas ustedes	they you (pl.) formal	se	themselves yourselves (pl.) formal	se bañan

Using a verb reflexively can also change the meaning. For example:

ir = to go Mañana yo **voy** al cine. Tomorrow I am going to the movies
BUT
irse = to go away Mañana yo **me voy**. Tomorrow I am going away.