

Chapter 13: Reflexive and Intensive Pronouns

Chapter 13 covers the following: the formation and use of reflexive pronouns and possessive adjectives, like “myself, my own, yourself, your own”; the formation and use of intensive pronouns, such as “I myself, you yourself”; and at the end of the lesson we’ll review the vocabulary which you should memorize in this chapter.

There are four important rules to remember in this chapter: (1) reflexives reflect the subject; (2) reflexive forms must match the subject in person and number; (3) English -self or -selves forms can refer to action which either affects oneself, in which case they’re reflexive, or is done in person in which case they’re intensive; (4) English intensives tend to follow directly what they refer to; English reflexives, as a rule, never do.

Reflexive Pronouns. This chapter entails study of a subject where you’ll quickly come to see that Latin is more logical than English, namely the formation and use of what grammarians call reflexive pronouns. Reflexive pronouns are pronouns that refer back to the subject and English overmarks these forms. For instance, we say “I praise myself.” Think about it for a second. You don’t have to say “-self.” You can just say “I praise me,” and it means the same thing. So we overmark the reflexive by saying “myself,” when we could just say “me.” In the same way we say “You praise yourself,” you could simply say “You praise you,” and it would mean the same thing.

Only in the third person is the “-self” form actually required, because in any sentence and context it is clear who “I” or “you” is, but it is not always clear who “he” is. That’s because there can be two different “he’s” being referred to, but you and I always know who we are when we’re speaking with each other. So unlike “me” and “myself” or “you” and “yourself,” “him” and “himself” have to be differentiated, for instance, “He praises him,” meaning “The poet praises the king.” Here the “him” is non-reflexive because it is not the poet praising himself. To make the sentence reflexive, you change “him” to “himself” and you change the thought of the sentence entirely. “He praises himself” means the poet is praising the poet, not the king. The same is true of the third person plural, for example, “They praise them,” meaning “The poets are praising the kings.” There “them” is non-reflexive, but “They praise themselves” (“The poets are praising the poets”), there “themselves” is reflexive.

Where English overmarks reflexives, Latin does not. So, for example, Latin says *me laudo*, “I praise me” literally, meaning “I praise myself,” or *te laudas*, “You praise you,” meaning “You praise yourself.” Notice that you can tell whether a pronoun is reflexive if it has the same person and number as the subject. So, for instance, the *te* in a sentence like *te laudo*, “I praise you,” cannot be reflexive because *te* has a different person — it’s second person — from the subject embedded in the verb *laudo* which is first person.

Latin uses different forms for reflexives and non-reflexives only when the difference makes a difference, that is, in the third person. “He praises him (someone else)” is non-reflexive and has to be distinguished from “He praises himself” which is reflexive. The same is true in the third person plural. “They praise them (“them” meaning a different group of people from “they”) is non-reflexive. “They praise themselves” is reflexive.

So if reflexive pronouns reflect the subject, they can be in any of the following cases:

- the genitive: “He longed for praise of *himself*.”
- the dative: “We gave a gift to *ourselves*.”
- the accusative: “You love *yourself* too much.”
- and the ablative: “They can see good in *themselves*.”

But reflexive pronouns cannot be nominative because they must reflect the subject; they can’t be the subject. A mirror cannot see its own reflection. Wow, man that’s deep.

So here are the forms of the reflexive pronoun in Latin and notice there’s no nominative. Notice also that in the first and second person singular and plural there are no forms to memorize, because in those persons and numbers the reflexive pronouns are the same as the personal pronouns. The only form you’ll have to memorize here is the third-person reflexive pronoun, the quaint and slightly country sounding *sui, sibi, se, se*. *Sui, sibi, se, se*: so Jethro *se se* it ‘till the pigs come home.

Note that Latin makes no distinction between the singular and plural of the third-person reflexive pronoun because the subject makes it clear what *sui, sibi, se, se* refers to. If the subject is he, *sui, sibi, se, se* has to mean “himself;” if the subject is she, it has to mean “herself;” it “itself;” and they “themselves.” One last thing to note about the reflexive pronoun is that, when it is the object of the preposition *cum*, it will behave the same way that the pronouns *me, te, nobis, and vobis* do. It will reverse the usual order of preposition and object and form a single word *secum*, meaning “with himself,” “with herself,” “with itself,” or “with themselves.”

In the same way that the personal pronoun *me* has a possessive adjective counterpart *meus*, or *tu* has *tuus*, the reflexive pronouns also have adjective counterparts called reflexive possessive adjectives and, as we’ve seen before with the reflexive pronoun, the Latin use of the reflexive possessive adjective is more logical than that of English where “-self” forms are overused. With the reflexive possessive adjective, English overuses “own,” the reflexive adjective equivalent of “-self.” That is, where English will say “I have my **own** book” — “own” is unnecessary — Latin will say “I have my book.” The first-person singular form *meus* has to be reflexive if the subject of the sentence is “I.” In that case, there’s no need to overmark the reflexive the way English does by using “own.”

Just as with the pronouns the first- and second-person singular and plural reflexive possessive adjectives are the same as their personal possessive adjective counterparts *meus, tuus, noster, and vester*, all of which become reflexive if they match the subject in person and number. That is, *meus* turns into “my own” if the subject is “I,” *tuus* “your own” if the subject is you, and so on. Note that they cannot be reflexive unless they are the same person and number as the subject. “He has your own book,” makes no sense. It has to be “You have your own book.”

And again, as with the pronouns a distinction must be made between reflexive and non-reflexive forms in the third person. So, for instance, “He has his own book.” “His own” as the reflexive form means that the king has his own (the king’s) book, as opposed to “He has his — that is, someone else’s — book,” meaning “The king has the poet’s book,” in which case “his” is non-reflexive. That means that, unlike in the first and second person, in the third person there needs

to be a special reflexive possessive adjective, and there is: *suus*, -a, -um meaning “his/hers/its/their own.” In principle then, it can be used only when the subject is third person and note that its translation — whether it’s “his,” “hers,” “its” or “theirs” — depends on the nature of the subject. So, for instance *rex suos libros habet* means “The king has his own books.” *Suos* in this case means “his own” because the subject is “king,” but if we change the subject, the translation of *suus* must change accordingly. So, for instance, *puella suum librum habet* means “The girl has her own book.” Because the subject is *puella* and *suus* is reflexive, the translation of *suus* becomes “her own” in this instance. If we change the subject again and make it neuter singular, then *suus* becomes “its own,” so, for instance, *otium sua pericula habet* meaning “Leisure possesses its own perils.” Or we can make the subject plural. Then *suus* becomes “their own,” for example, *pueri suos libros habent*, “The boys have their own books.”

Did you notice that the endings on *suos*, particularly their number and gender, had nothing to do with the translation of *suus*? So, for instance, “Leisure possesses its own perils;” the proper form of *suus* there, *sua*, is plural because the adjective agrees with *pericula*, but because *suus* is reflexive and reflects back to a singular subject, *otium*, it’s translated as “its own,” which brings home the all-important lesson I’ve been trying to drive into your brains since Chapter 4: the endings on Latin adjectives are directional. They simply tell you what noun to take the adjective with. Nowhere else is that lesson more important than here with reflexive possessive adjectives. Let’s look at another example: *rex nihil suae filiae dedit*, “The king gave nothing to his own daughter.” Notice that the *su-* part of *suae* here means “his own” because *suus* as a reflexive possessive adjective reflects the subject and the subject here is “king” which is singular and masculine. Therefore, the proper translation of *suus* in this sentence is “his own.” But the ending on the adjective is *-ae* because the adjective agrees with *filiae* which is the indirect object meaning “to the daughter” and thus dative singular feminine. Here’s another example: *illa culpas filiorum suorum vidit*, “That woman saw the faults of her own sons.” Because the subject is *illa*, “that woman,” *suus* means “her own,” and because *suus* agrees with *filiorum*, it is genitive plural masculine: *suorum*. Here’s one last example: *sine pecuniā suā non valebunt*, “Without their own money, they will not do well.” [Take that, you communists!] Because the subject is “they” embedded in the verb, *valebunt*, in this sentence *suus* means “their own.” But its ending is not plural; rather, it’s ablative singular feminine because *suā* agrees with *pecuniā* here.

But reflexive possessive adjectives are different from their pronoun counterparts in one surprising respect: they have nominative forms and that’s because they can refer to the subject of a previous thought, for instance, “The king was headed to the forum but his son -- meaning his own son -- stopped him.” Here, “his own” refers to the king; thus, it reflects the subject, but the subject of the first sentence, “the king.” In the second sentence, “his own” modifies “son” which would be *filius*, nominative singular masculine in Latin; thus, the form of the reflexive possessive adjective in the second sentence must be *suus*: *filius suus*, nominative. Now if it were someone else’s son who stopped the king — that seems unlikely but let’s go with it — the “his” is no longer reflexive. In that case, Latin would use *eius* for “his” — *filius eius* or *huius*, *illius*, *istius*, if you are pointing at them in a condescending manner which would almost certainly be the king’s perspective — because the “his” no longer reflects “the king.”

We’ve looked at demonstrative pronouns like *hic* and *ille*, personal pronouns like *ego* and *tu*, demonstrative pronouns that function as personal pronouns like *is*, *ea*, *id* and, in this lesson,

reflexive pronouns like *sui, sibi, se, se*. Can you say *sui, sibi, se, se* now? Without looking at the book. *Sui, sibi, se, se*. Can you *se, se* it? Did you know that the two *se*'s at the end, the accusative and the ablative, can both be doubled as *sese*? So it can be *sui, sibi, sese, sese*. Can you *sese* that? If not, you should.

Here's another type of pronoun and sadly not the last type we'll study in this class: the intensive pronoun. And here again English is more complicated, and unnecessarily so, than Latin. English intensive pronouns use the same form as their reflexive counterparts — “himself,” “herself,” “itself” and so on — which means in English you can't look at a pronoun that's intensive or reflexive and tell which one it is, based only on the appearance of its form. In English, intensives and reflexives look the same [insert thunderclap sound effect]. Consider the following: “He himself went to the forum.” What does “himself” mean here? Think about it. It means he went there in person. He didn't send one of his slaves or one of his friends. He went there and did his business on his own. As opposed to “He went to the forum and bought food for himself.” Here “himself” is reflexive because it refers back to “he,” the subject. In other words, he did it in his own behalf.

Now consider this sentence: “You yourself praised yourself.” The first “yourself” is intensive. “You yourself” means you did it in person. The second “yourself” is reflexive. “Praised yourself” means the action of praising was brought back on “you,” the subject. Note that in English the intensive and reflexive pronoun forms are the same. They're both “yourself.” By now I suspect you can guess where this is going. Latin does not confuse these two very different forms. In Latin, intensives and reflexives are not the same.

Reflexives are formed the way we just studied: *mei, tui, sui, sibi, se, se* and so on. The Latin intensive looks very different. It's *ipse, ipsa, ipsum*. Thus in Latin “You yourself praise yourself” would be *te ipse laudas*: literally, *te*, direct object, “yourself”; *ipse*, nominative, “you yourself,” intensive; *laudas*, “praise.”

And here are the forms of *ipse, ipsa, ipsum*. Look familiar? They should! The endings are virtually identical to *ille, illa, illud*. The only difference: the irregular *-d* (the ending of the neuter nominative and accusative singular of *illud*) is missing in *ipse, ipsa, ipsum* — and who can complain about that? Even the irregularities are regular if you think about *ille*. For instance, the nominative singular masculine *ipse* is perfectly predictable if you compare it to *ille*, and by now you should be used to mandatory long marks in the ablative singular feminine of any form which follows first declension. In first declension, or anything like it, this macron is mandatory because it distinguishes the ablative singular feminine from its nominative singular counterpart as well as the neuter nominative and accusative plural forms. *Ille* also should lead you to expect a genitive singular ending in *-ius* and a dative singular ending in *-i*, which is exactly what you get: *ipsius* and *ipsi*.

Thus, the real challenge here is not Latin but English, in particular, differentiating between intensive and reflexive forms. Oh heavens, how do we English speakers keep all these “-selves” apart? Hang onto your horses, Reginald, it's not as bad as it seems. For starters, they mean different things. Intensives intensify. They mean “in person.” Reflexives reflect. They refer back to the subject. But there's another pattern that can help you as well. In English, intensives tend to

follow directly the word they go with. So, for example, “The woman herself brought food,” or “The Romans themselves built a city.” In both examples the intensive forms “herself” and “themselves” denote that the woman and the Romans did these actions in person. Note also that in both sentences the “-self” form follows directly the noun it intensifies.

On the other hand, while reflexives in English have the same form as intensives — both using “self” — the use of the reflexive is very different and so is its placement in the sentence. They almost never follow directly the word they reflect, the subject. Instead there is almost always a verb between them and the subject. So, taking the same two sentences, I can turn an intensive “-self” form into a reflexive “-self” form simply by moving it in the sentence. In the first sentence, putting the verb “brought” in between “woman” and “herself” changes it from an intensive form, “the woman herself” to a reflexive form “The woman brought herself food,” meaning she brought it for herself, “herself” now reflecting the subject. Notice that the meaning of the sentence changed entirely when we shifted the pronoun from intensive to reflexive. Notice the same thing happens when you make the same change in the second sentence: “The Romans built themselves a city.” “Themselves” is now reflexive.

So when you see a verb between a “-self” form and the thing it modifies, it’s most likely reflexive — with one hideous exception! Consider this sentence: “The Romans built the city themselves.” There’s a verb “built” between the subject “Romans” and the “-self” form “themselves.” So is “themselves” reflexive or intensive? In other words, did the Romans do it to themselves? Did they build themselves? No, they built the city. Here “themselves” can’t be reflexive. It must be intensive. It means “in person.” The Romans themselves built the city, not Greek slaves. But there’s a verb between “the Romans” and “themselves.” “Themselves” should be reflexive but it’s not. So there must be a weird idiom in English in which intensives can be put at the end of the sentence and still refer to a noun earlier in the sentence which means that pattern in which intensives follow the noun they go with is only a tendency, not a rule. Isn’t that just annoying? Stupid English. If the Romans were still around, they’d probably conquer us and make us fix our intensives and reflexives and I for one would shout *macte!* “Well done!” Now, now, calm down. In all fairness to English, the meaning does distinguish “-self” forms but, O dear English speaker, you yourself always have to remember to ask yourself if any “-self” you happen to run into is intensive or reflexive. Be sure always to do this itself yourself for yourself.

Vocabulary. The first word is *Cicero, Ciceronis*, m. It means “Cicero” and it’s third-declension masculine. It’s the name of the famous Roman orator and it’s related to the Latin word for “chickpea,” that is, “garbanzo bean.” I have no idea why but I’ll bet he got teased in junior high school about it, which would go some distance toward explaining his personality.

Next word. *Corpus, corporis*, n., meaning “body.” It’s a third-declension neuter noun. Remember, it’s easy to confuse third-declension neuter nouns with second-declension masculine nouns, because both types often have a nominative singular ending in *-us*. So, if it’s third declension neuter, what’s its accusative plural form? Good for you! *Corpora*.

The next word is *ipse, ipsa, ipsum*, meaning “-self.” It’s first/second declension — mostly. *Ipse* is the intensive pronoun we discussed intensively above. Let’s see if you were listening. What’s the

genitive singular of this pronoun? You were listening. Excellent. It's *ipsius*, like a demonstrative pronoun. So what would be the dative singular? That was too easy: *ipsi*.

The next word is *nomen, nominis, n.*, meaning "name." It's a third-declension neuter noun. So what would be its dative singular? Good: *nomini*. And what would be its genitive plural? Hmm... *nominum*. And its accusative singular? If you said *nomen*, you're right! Remember that neuter nominatives and accusatives are always the same. So if the nominative singular is *nomen*, so is the accusative singular.

The next word is *sui, sibi, se, se*, the reflexive pronoun we discussed above. I'm hoping you remember it by now. You need to. You're going to see it a lot.

The next word is *suus, -a, -um*. It means "his/her/its/their own." It's first/second declension. This is the third-person reflexive possessive adjective we discussed above. And please note it declines like *bonus* or *magnus*. None of this *-ius* genitive singular or *-i* dative singular business! That's for demonstrative pronouns, and this is a first/second-declension adjective.

The next word is *ante*. It means "before, in front of." It's a preposition that takes the accusative, just like the preposition *post* (which we've encountered before) which also takes an object in the accusative case. *Post*, however, can also serve as an adverb meaning "before, previously," and if so, it does not take an accusative object. It simply stands alone.

The next word is *nam*. It means "for." This is "for" in the sense of "because." For example, "They will come to us, **for** they need our help." This is the "for" that is a conjunction, not the "for" that represents the dative case. This is a potential confusion we've already encountered with *nam*'s close kin *enim*.

The next word is *numquam*. It's another adverb and it means "never." Please also learn its correlative *umquam* which means "ever." *Numquam umquam*, "never ever."

The next word is *per*. It means "through." It's a preposition that takes the accusative case, for example, *per loca illa*, "through those places." It can also, and often does, serve as the prefix on the front of a verb, in which case it modifies the meaning of the verb slightly adding a sense of "thoroughly, very" as in *perterreo* meaning "thoroughly frighten."

The last two words on this vocabulary list are both verbs and both very important ones. The first verb is *iungo, iungere, iunxi, iunctum*. It means "join" and it's third conjugation. It can also be spelled with a *j*- in place of the initial *i*- which explains the spelling of English derivatives like "junction" and "adjunct." To form its perfect base, this verb lengthens its internal vowel and adds *-s* resulting in *iung-* plus *-s*, *iunx-*; *g-* plus *-s* will be spelled as *-x* in Latin. And the long mark here is not mandatory because by itself it does not distinguish any two forms from each other. In the same way that, when *-g-* runs into *-s* it turns into *-x-* in the perfect, in the fourth principal part when the *-g-* runs into *-t-* it turns into a *-c-*, *iunctum*. How will Latin say "they will join"? Think about it. It's third conjugation. Excellent: *iungent*.

The final vocabulary item on this list is *diligo, diligere, dilēxi, dilectum*. It means “esteem, love” and it’s a third-conjugation verb. It means literally “choose” (-*leg-*) “apart” (*dis-*). In other words, it signifies that a person has chosen someone or something out of a group and thus holds it in high esteem, that is, cherishes or loves it. Just as with *iungo/iunxi*, the perfect base *dilēx-* has both an internal vowel that’s been lengthened and -*s-* has been added onto the end of the present base. Again, -*g-* plus -*s* is spelled with an -*x*. And again, the macron on the -*ē-* is not a mandatory long mark. What would be the future perfect first person singular of this verb? I’ll give you a moment. Get the perfect base. Add the right ending. Remember there are only two parts to any perfect active verb. Good: *dilēxero*, meaning “I will have loved.” And going to a totally different part of the conjugational map, what would be the imperative singular of this verb? Remember the imperative uses the present base. If you said *dilige, tum te diligo*.

But what I *diligo* even more than *te* is that we’re at the end of the presentation for Chapter 13. Do the rules that were cited at the beginning of this chapter now make sense to you? If not, please review this presentation. If so, please proceed to the next slide.

For the next class meeting, please bring in a copy of the worksheet for Chapter 13. Here’s a link to that worksheet.

Mox vos mecum reiungite, O discipuli!