

Unit 81 Reflexive pronouns (myself/yourself etc.)

a The reflexive pronouns are:

singular:	myself	yourself (one person)	himself/herself/itself
plural:	ourselves	yourselves (more than one person)	themselves

We use a reflexive pronoun when the subject and object are the same:

Tom cut himself while he was shaving. (not 'Tom cut him')

- I don't want you to pay for me. I'll pay for myself.
- The old lady sat in a corner talking to herself.
- Don't get angry. Control yourself! (said to one person)
- I went out and took an umbrella with me. (not 'with myself')

b We do not use 'myself' etc. feel/relax/concentrate:

- I feel great after having a swim. (not 'I feel myself great')
- You must try and concentrate.
- It's good to relax.

We do not normally use 'myself' etc. after wash/dress/shave:

- I got up, shaved, washed and dressed. (not 'shaved myself' etc.)

But we say: I dried myself.

Note how we use meet:

- What time shall we meet? (not 'meet ourselves / meet us')

c Study the difference between -selves and each other:

- Tom and Ann stood in front of the mirror and looked at themselves.
(= Tom and Ann looked at Tom and Ann)

but: Tom looked at Ann and Ann looked at Tom. They looked at each other.

You can use one another instead of each other:

- How long have you and Bill known each other (or one another)?
- Sue and Ann don't like each other (or one another).

d We also use myself etc. in another way. For example:

- 'Who repaired your bicycle for you' 'Nobody. I repaired it myself.'

I repaired it myself = I repaired it, not anybody else. We use myself here to emphasise I. Here are some more examples:

- I'm not going to do it for you. You can do it yourself.
- Let's paint the house ourselves. It will be much cheaper.
- The film itself wasn't very good but I liked the music.
- I don't think Tom will get the job. Tom himself doesn't think he'll get it. (or 'Tom doesn't think he'll get it himself.')

For 'by myself / by yourself' etc. see Unit 80c.

