**REFLEXIVE VERBS**

A verb is reflexive when the subject and the object are the same.

Another way to think of it is when the subject is doing something to itself, it is **reflexive**. When the subject is doing something to someone or something else, it is **not reflexive**.

In English we make verbs reflexive by adding the word “himself”, “myself”, “yourself” and so on to the sentence. In Spanish, it’s done by using what is called a reflexive verb.

When a reflexive verb is used in Spanish, it is already understood that the action of the verb is being performed on the subject.

Let’s look at some examples of reflexive verbs in English to understand the concept, then we’ll start working with Spanish.

***I wash myself.*** *subject: I verb: wash object: myself*

***Since the subject and object are the same, the verb is reflexive.***

***I wash the car.*** *subject: I verb: wash object: car*

***Since the subject and object are different, the verb is not reflexive.***

Here’s another example of how a verb can be either reflexive or non-reflexive.

***I scratch myself.*** *subject: I verb: scratch object: myself*

***Since the subject and object are the same, the verb is reflexive.***

***I scratch the dog.*** *subject: I verb: scratch object: dog*

***Since the subject and object are different, the verb is not reflexive.***

When a verb is reflexive, the infinitive ends in “se.”

***Lavar*** *to wash (non-reflexive)*

***Lavarse*** *to wash oneself (reflexive)*

***Rascar*** *to scratch (non-reflexive)*

***Rascarse*** *to scratch oneself (reflexive)*

There is one reflexive verb you have been using since you began studying Spanish.

***llamarse****– to call oneself*

***¿Cómo se llama usted?*** *What do you call yourself?*

***Me llamo Juan.*** *I call myself Juan.*

**Note:** A more “natural” translation would be “What is your name?” and “My name is Juan.”

To learn to conjugate reflexive verbs, you need to learn a set of pronouns called “reflexive pronouns.” These pronouns are positioned before the verb, while the ending “se” is dropped and the verb is conjugated normally.

***Lavarse*** *yo****me****lavo I wash (myself)*

*tú****te****lavas you wash (yourself) (informal)*

*él****se****lava he washes (himself)*

*ella****se****lava she washes (herself)*

*usted****se****lava you wash (yourself) (formal)*

*nosotros****nos****lavamos we wash (ourselves)*

*ustedes****se****lavan you-all wash (yourselves)(formal)*

*ellos****se****lavan they wash (themselves)*

*ellas****se****lavan they wash (themselves) (feminine)*

The reflexive pronouns are not subject pronouns; rather they are object pronouns.

***me****(myself)****te****(yourself)****se****(himself, herself, yourself)****nos****(ourselves)****os****(yourselves)****se****(themselves, yourselves)*

The purpose of the reflexive object pronouns is to show that the action of the verb remains with the subject.

***Juan se lava la cara.*** *Juan washes his face. (reflexive)*

***Juan lava su carro.****(non-reflexive) Juan washes his car.*

***Note:****When referring to body parts, use the definite article, thus “la cara” not “su cara.”*

Note that many, many verbs can be made reflexive. All it means when a verb is reflexive is that the action remains with the subject.

*wash the dog (non-reflexive) wash your face (reflexive)*

*raise the book (non-reflexive) raise yourself (reflexive)*

*put the baby to bed (non-reflexive) go to bed (reflexive)*

*wake up your son (non-reflexive) wake up yourself (reflexive)*

*…and so on*

**SOME COMMON REFLEXIVE VERBS**

**Verb Meaning**

Aburrirse To get bored.

Afeitarse To shave (oneself).

Bañarse To take a bath.

Cansarse To get tired.

Casarse To get married.

Despertarse To wake up.

Divertirse To have fun.

Emborracharse To get drunk.

Enamorarse To fall in love.

Graduarse To graduate.

Levantarse To get up.

Lavarse To wash (oneself).

Maquillarse To put on makeup.

Olvidarse To forget.

Peinarse To comb (one’s hair).

Quedarse To stay (behind).

Vestirse To get dressed.

**Quiz**

Choose the appropriate reflexive pronoun.

* 1. You take a shower. Tú \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_duchas.
  2. Maria washes her hair. María  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_lava el pelo.
  3. You-all wake up. Ustedes \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_despiertan.
  4. We brush our teeth. Nosotros \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_cepillamos los dientes.
  5. She gets dressed. Ella \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_viste.
  6. They sit down. Ellos \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_sientan.
  7. I'm worried about you. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_preocupo por ti.

Write the correct form of the verb and pronoun.

* 1. Maria washes her hair. (lavarse)  María \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_el pelo.
  2. We take a shower. (ducharse)  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
  3. They brush their teeth. (cepillarse)  Ellos \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_los dientes.
  4. I shave my legs. (afeitarse)  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_las piernas.
  5. The boys fall asleep. (dormirse o:ue)  Los niños \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  6. The young ladies get dressed. (vestirse e:i)  Las señoritas  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  7. We sit down. (sentarse e:ie) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_