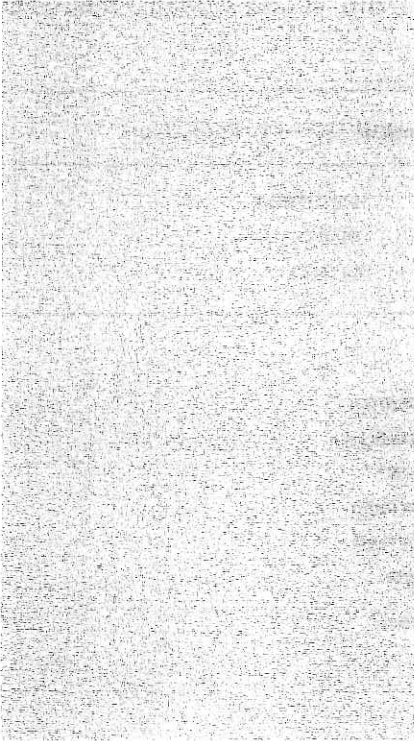


Reflexive Verbs



A verb is reflexive when the subject (the performer of the action) and the object (the receiver of that action) are the same.

For example, the verb in the sentence *I see you* is not reflexive because *I* (the subject/actor) and *you* (the object/receiver) are not the same person. However, if I look in the mirror and see myself, the verb is reflexive because *I* (the subject) and *me* (the object) are the same person. Another way of looking at reflexive verbs is to say that the action doesn't go anywhere.

In English, the object of a reflexive verb is usually one of the following: myself; yourself; himself; herself; itself; ourselves; themselves. In Spanish, reflexive verbs require reflexive object pronouns, which are employed in the same manner as direct and indirect object pronouns:

If there is one verb in the clause, the object pronoun precedes the verb.

Me veo. I see *myself*.

If there are two verbs in the clause, the object either precedes the first verb *or* is attached directly to the second verb. Either is acceptable.

Me quiero ver. *or* Quiero verme. I want to see *myself*.

Another important distinction is that in English, our use of the reflexive pronoun is quite restricted and generally involves the full being: I love *myself*, You know *yourself*, He hates *himself*, and so on.

In Spanish, however, this notion of being reflexive is far more expansive. As long as the action is going back to the actor, it is considered a reflexive verb. Thus, *I wash my hair*, *You take a bath*, and *We brush our teeth* are all examples of sentences that will require reflexive pronouns in Spanish.

These are the reflexive pronouns

me	nos
te	os
se	se

examples:

bañarse (to take a bath)		sentarse (to sit down)	
me baño	nos bañamos	me siento	nos sentamos
te bañas	os bañáis	te sientas	os sentáis
se baña	se bañan	se sienta	se sientan

Note that *sentarse* is an *e* → *ie* stem-changing verb. It means literally to “seat oneself.”

A few things to know before working with reflexive verbs

1. Many reflexive verbs are stem-changing (these are noted in the list at the end of this unit), and you will conjugate them just as you learned in the previous units.
2. Many involve the mentioning of a body part or parts (e.g., *cepillarse*—to brush). Generally speaking, use the definite article rather than the possessive adjective before the body part (because of the reflexive pronoun, it is obvious whose body is being discussed):

Me cepillo **el** pelo. I brush *my* hair.
 Ella se cepilla **los** dientes. She brushes *her* teeth.
 Te lavas **el** pelo. You wash *your* hair.
3. Nearly all verbs in the language can be **either** reflexive or non-reflexive: I can scratch myself (reflexive) or I can scratch my cat (non-reflexive). Thus, the list below is far from exhaustive. However, there are certain actions that *usually* are reflexive due to the nature of the action (bathing, shaving, brushing teeth, etc.). For the most part, these are the verbs you will find below.
4. One unusual verb below is *irse* (to go away). This strays from the general description of the reflexive verb in that this is not a case where the subject and object are the same. Instead, the reflexive pronoun *intensifies* the action. One other exception is *comerse* (to gobble up) which does not mean “to eat oneself.”

Some commonly used reflexive verbs:

acostarse (<i>o</i> → <i>ue</i>)	to go to bed
afeitarse	to shave oneself
bañarse	to bathe oneself
casarse (con alguien)	to get married; to marry (someone)
cepillarse	to brush oneself
despertarse (<i>e</i> → <i>ie</i>)	to wake up
desvestirse (<i>e</i> → <i>i</i>)	to undress oneself
dormirse (<i>o</i> → <i>ue</i>)	to fall asleep
ducharse	to take a shower
enfermarse	to get sick
enojarse	to get angry, mad
irse	to go away
lavarse	to wash oneself
levantarse	to stand up, get up

llamarse	to call oneself
mirarse	to look at oneself
peinarse	to comb one's hair
ponerse	to become
ponerse (la ropa)	to put on (clothing)
preocuparse (por)	to worry (about)
probarse (o → ue)	to try on (clothing)
quitarse	to take off, remove (clothing)
secarse	to dry oneself
sentarse (e → ie)	to sit down, seat oneself
sentirse (e → ie)	to feel (emotionally, physically)
verse	to see oneself
vestirse (e → i)	to get dressed

examples:

Me quito el sombrero.
I take off my hat.

Te acuestas a las once.
You go to bed at eleven o'clock.

Romeo **se casa con** Julieta.
Romeo *marries* Juliet.

Nos vestimos en la mañana.
We get dressed in the morning.

Os llamáis Brígida y Pancho.
Your names are Brigida and Pancho.

Ellas se ponen nerviosas.
They become/get nervous.

¿Cuál es verdadero o falso para ti?

- _____ 1. Me acuesto a las diez de la noche.
- _____ 2. Me despierto a las seis y media de la mañana.
- _____ 3. Me lavo el pelo cada día.
- _____ 4. Me ducho cada mañana.
- _____ 5. Me siento enfermo/a ahora.
- _____ 6. Me pongo feliz cuando recibo un regalo para mi cumpleaños.
- _____ 7. Me preocupo mucho por el dinero.
- _____ 8. Me cepillo los dientes tres veces cada día.
- _____ 9. Me enfermo más en el invierno que en el verano.
- _____ 10. Me llamo Juan.
- _____ 11. Después de ducharme, me visto.
- _____ 12. Antes de acostarme, me quito la ropa y me pongo el pijama.

ejercicio

I-10-1

1. I go to bed. _____
2. You wash your hair. _____
3. He shaves every morning. _____
4. She shaves her legs. _____
5. You (*pl. fam.*) wake up. _____
6. They sit down. _____
7. She goes away. _____
8. My name is Rex. _____
9. You take a shower. _____
10. We get dressed. _____
11. You (*pl. fam.*) fall asleep. _____
12. She takes a bath. _____
13. I worry about the future. _____
14. You (*pl. form.*) wake up. _____
15. I get undressed (*desnudarse*) at night. _____
16. Your name is Alicia. _____
17. He takes off his shirt. _____
18. You (*pl. form.*) see yourselves in the mirror. _____
19. I feel sick. _____
20. You comb your hair. _____
21. We brush our teeth. _____
22. She falls asleep. _____
23. Do you take a shower? _____
24. His name is Martin. _____

traducción

I-10-2

Every night Marta goes to bed at eleven-thirty. She falls asleep quickly and she never has nightmares. Every morning she wakes up at six-thirty, but she doesn't get up until seven o'clock. She enters the bathroom where she brushes her teeth and looks at herself in the mirror. Some days she takes a bath, but usually she takes a shower because it's faster and because Marta feels cleaner. After the shower (or bath), Marta combs her hair and dries her hair. She gets dressed, walks to the kitchen where she sits down, drinks coffee, and reads the newspaper for fifteen minutes. Then she goes (away) to work.

vocabulario

bathroom

clean

fast

(to) look at (oneself)

mirror

el baño

limpio

rápido

mirar(se)

el espejo

nightmare

quickly

shower

then

work

la pesadilla

rápidamente

la ducha

entonces

el trabajo

On a separate piece of paper, describe your morning routine, using as many reflexive verbs as you can.