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VERBS L8 – REFLEXIVE VERBS

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WHAT ARE REFLEXIVE VERBS?

Reflexive verbs require an additional **reflexive pronoun**, which takes the **accusative** or **dative** case. The reflexive pronoun is related to the subject of the sentence.



Ich	wasche	mich	jeden Tag.
Du	interessierst	dich	für Anna.
Subject	Verb	<u>Reflexive Pronoun</u>	Rest

REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS

Personal Pronouns	Reflexive Pronouns	
	Accusative	Dative
ich	mich	mir
du	dich	dir
er/sie/es	sich	sich
wir	uns	uns
Ihr	euch	euch
sie/Sie	sich	sich

TRUE REFLEXIVE VERBS

A true reflexive verb is always reflexive!

You can't replace or omit the reflexive pronoun.

You can't ask a question about the reflexive pronoun.

- „Ich **konzentriere** **mich** (auf den Unterricht).“

It is impossible to use "konzentrieren" without the reflexive pronoun.

In the dictionary, these words are marked in the following way:

- "s. konzentrieren", "sich konzentrieren", "konzentrieren (ref.)"

These words might not be reflexive in your own language, but the use of the reflexive pronoun in German is obligatory.

PARTIAL REFLEXIVE VERBS

You can ask a question about it.

Partial reflexive verbs can be used in a reflexive or non-reflexive way. It depends on the situation.

The verb can also refer to an object instead of the subject and is then not reflexive.

- „Ich **wasche** **mich**.“
(Reflexive since it refers to the subject)
- „Ich **wasche** die Wäsche.“
(It refers to the object "Wäsche" and not to the subject "ich" ⇒ It's not reflexive, so we don't use a reflexive pronoun.)

DATIVE OR ACCUSATIVE?

Reflexive Pronouns in Accusative

If there is only one object in the sentence,
use Accusative.

Example:

„Ich **wasche** **mich**.“

Reflexive Pronouns in Dative

If there are two objects in the sentence,
the Reflexive Pronoun takes the Dative
Case.

Example:

„Ich **wasche** **mir** **die Hände**.“

Exception: If the verb requires a certain case.

WORD ORDER

Main Sentence:

Position 1	Position 2	Position 3	
Ich	wasche	mich	heute Abend.

Question:

Position 1	Position 2	Position 3	
Wäschst	du	dich	heute Abend?

Subordinate Clause:

- "Ich wasche mich jetzt nicht, ..." – main clause

Position 1	Position 2	Position 3	
..., weil	ich	mich	heute Abend waschen werde.

Only the verb goes to the end. The reflexive pronoun remains in position 3.

With Modal and Auxiliary Verbs:

Position 1	Position 2	Position 3	
Ich	kann	mich	heute Abend waschen.
Ich	habe	mich	gestern Abend gewaschen.

Only the main verb goes to the end. The reflexive pronoun is in position 3, after the modal verb or the auxiliary verb.

SUMMARY

- Reflexive verbs use reflexive pronouns.
- There are true and partial reflexive verbs.
- If there's more than one object (and no prepositions involved), the reflexive pronoun will be dative unless the verb requires a certain case.
- In general, the reflexive pronouns are in position 3.

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