

Objects (objective case)

Nouns and pronouns can be either subjects or objects in a sentence. Any noun can be either, depending on what you are saying, but when it comes to pronouns, only *subject pronouns* can be subjects (this is called subjective case), and only *object pronouns* can be objects (this is called objective case). For more on subject and object pronouns, see the tip sheet [Pronouns](#). In a sentence, a noun or object pronoun can be a *direct object*, an *indirect object*, or the *object of a preposition*.

Direct object

A direct object is a noun or pronoun that *receives the action* of the verb. It follows an action verb:

I washed my *car*.
I washed *it*.
Alice fed the *kids*.
She fed *them*.

Indirect object

Indirect objects tell *to* or *for whom* the action of the verb is performed. We omit the words *for* and *to*; they are only implied. The indirect objects are italicized below:

I bought my <i>nephew</i> a bike.	(I bought [for] my <i>nephew</i> a bike.)
I bought <i>him</i> a bike.	(I bought [for] <i>him</i> a bike.)
She gave the <i>kids</i> cookies.	(She gave [to] the <i>kids</i> cookies.)
She gave <i>them</i> cookies.	(She gave [to] <i>them</i> cookies.)
I did <i>Ivan</i> a favor.	(I did [for] <i>Ivan</i> a favor.)
I did <i>him</i> a favor.	(I did [for] <i>him</i> a favor.)

Object of a preposition

An object of a preposition is the noun or pronoun (emphasized below) that *completes a prepositional phrase* (italicized).

We bought a bike *for my nephew*.
We bought a mountain bike *for him*.
She gave cookies *to the kids*.
She gave cookies *to them*.

Reflexive pronouns

Sometimes *the subject and the object refer to the same* person or thing. In that case, you must use a subject pronoun (or a noun) for the subject and a reflexive pronoun as the object. A reflexive pronoun is essential to the meaning of the sentence and cannot be removed without changing the sentence's essential meaning:

Reflexive pronouns as direct objects

The baby can feed *herself*.
She can feed *herself*.
Marcus drove *himself* to work.
He drove *himself*.

Reflexive pronouns as indirect objects

I bought *myself* a bike. (I bought [for] *myself* a bike.)
She cooked *herself* dinner (She cooked [for] *herself* dinner.)

Reflexive pronouns as objects of a preposition

I cooked dinner for *myself*.
They got movie tickets only for *themselves*.

The reflexive pronouns are *myself*, *yourself*, *himself*, *herself*, *itself*, *ourselves*, *yourselves*, and *themselves*. Notice there is no such word as *theirself* or *theirselves*.

Emphatic pronouns

However, you can also use reflexive pronouns to *emphasize the subject*. Then the pronoun is called *emphatic*, not reflexive. An emphatic pronoun is *not* essential to the meaning of the sentence; it does the work of an appositive, renaming a preceding noun or pronoun. You can remove an emphatic pronoun without affecting the essential meaning of the sentence:

I will fix the car.
I *myself* will fix the car [*myself* emphasizes *I*].
I will fix the car *myself*.

He drove the truck.
He drove the truck *himself* [*himself* emphasizes *he*].
Carlos *himself* drove it [*himself* emphasizes *Carlos*].

The brothers cooked dinner.
They cooked dinner *themselves* [*themselves* emphasizes *they*].
The brothers *themselves* cooked dinner. [*themselves* emphasizes *brothers*].

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