

Word Work

Language in Context

Reflexive & Emphatic Pronouns

In the story 'The Landlady', pronouns ending '-self' are used a number of times.

The room itself was filled with pleasant furniture.

Animals were usually a good sign in a place like this, Billy told himself.

The name itself conjured up images of watery cabbage.

Billy found himself automatically starting forward.

There are two different uses of the '-self' pronoun here: one is being used to for **emphasis** ("the room itself") and the other describes an action which refers to the same person who performs the action ("Billy told himself") and so is **reflexive**. In the first situation it is the subject of the sentence (a noun) which is being referred to ("the room"; "the name") directly, while the second requires an intervening verb ("told himself"; "found himself")

In the extracts from the story, decide which form is being used:

"I saw the notice in the window, " he said, holding himself back.

We have it *all* to ourselves," she said smiling at him over her shoulder.

The old girl is slightly dotty, Billy told himself.

"I stuff *all* my little pets myself when they pass away."

1. In the following extracts, the '-self' pronoun has not been used, but could easily have been. Using the prompts given, either rewrite or add a phrase which includes *myself*, *himself* or *itself*

Example:

1. Billy Weaver had travelled down from London on the slow train. (*He was alone*)
Billy Weaver had travelled down by himself from London on the slow train

Example:

2. "Find your own lodgings and then go along and report to the Manager."
(*substitute 'go' with 'take'*)
Find your own lodgings and then take yourself along and report to the Manager"

3. On the carpet in front of the fire, a pretty little dachshund was curled up asleep with its nose tucked into its belly. (*The dachshund was alone*)

4. Each word was like a black eye forcing him to stay where he was. (*He was unable to control events. Use the verb 'help' in a new phrase*)

5. "And this one is *all yours*," she said. (*emphasise it is his alone*)

6. "And you may light the gas fire at any time if you feel chilly." (*substitute 'if you feel chilly' with phrase using the verb 'warm'*)

7. I'm a lucky fellow, he thought, rubbing his hands. (*replace 'thought' with the verb 'congratulate'*)

8. "They're on the fourth floor, both of them together." (*insert a phrase using the verb 'have' and the quantifier 'whole'*)

9. "Milk?" she said. "And sugar?" (*add phrase using verb 'help'*)

10. "It doesn't look in the least bit dead. Who did it?" "I did." (*add two words to emphasise that no one helped*)

2. Rewrite the sentences so it includes a suitable form of one of the verbs in the box, and a reflexive pronoun.

<p>ask behave blame cut feed enjoy express hurt introduce talk</p>
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1. We can leave the food in the fridge, and Billy ...**can feed himself**..
2. I keepwhy those name were so familiar.
3. The landlady spoke clearly and had no difficulty in.....
4. When she slipped off the sofa, she didn't
5. Billy was polite and always
6. Billy had to but she forgot his name anyway.
7. The accident wasn't your fault. Don't
8. The landlady had a habit of _____ to _____ when nobody else was around.
9. When she was preparing her 'pets' for stuffing, she never
10. Bath is a very pleasant city and you should there.

Word Work

Comparatives

While Billy and the landlady are drinking tea, she compares him with the two previous guests whose names Billy has seen in the guest-book.

"He was a trifle shorter than you are, and his teeth weren't *quite so white*. You have the most beautiful teeth, Mr Weaver, did you know that?"
 "They're not as good as they look," Billy said.

The direct comparisons "**so white**" and "**as good as**" are both preceded by negative verbs ('*were not*' and '*are not*'). In this case we can use either 'so' or 'as' to compare things. (Remember that in **so white** the meaning **so white as yours** is implied).

Therefore we can say

- His teeth weren't quite so white (as yours)
- His teeth weren't quite as white (as yours)
- They're not as good as they look
- They're not so good as they look

However, we don't have this choice if the meaning is positive

- His teeth were as white as yours** ✓
- His teeth were so white as yours **X**
- They are as good as they look** ✓
- They are so good as they look **X**

Look at the chart below. It compares some details about Billy Weaver, Christopher Mulholland and Gregory Temple. Write five positive and five negative sentences comparing any two of them at a time. (10 sentences in all).

	Billy Weaver	Christopher Mulholland	Gregory Temple
age	17	17	28
teeth	very white	white	yellowish
skin	smooth	silky	like a baby
height	1.82	1.80	1.81
weight	85kgs	82kgs	87kgs
shoe size	43	41	43
occupation	junior salesman	student	scientist
family background	lower class	upper class	middle class
city of origin	London	Cardiff	Bristol
general appearance	very handsome	very handsome	very handsome

Example: Christopher Mulholland's teeth weren't as white as Billy Weaver's

Word Work

Glossary

Note: These words and phrases are correct for the context of 'The Landlady' but may have different meanings in different contexts.

a bit of all right	(old fashioned) enjoyable
alas	sadly
baby-grand piano	smallest of long, three legged pianos
big shot	important person
bitter almonds	unsweetened taste of essence of almond nuts
blotchy	uneven marks
brisk	quick, efficient
choosy	not easily pleased
dainty	delicate
dither	unable to decide (what to do)
dotty	crazy
Eton	famous and exclusive private school
five and sixpence	old British money, value about 18 euro cents
frisky	lively
fuss	paying a lot of attention to
glow	giving off a warm light
hearth	place in a room where a fire is put
jack-in-the-box	children's toy where head on a spring jumps out of a box
kippers	a smoked fish (herring)
landing	place where stairs meet in a house
off her rocker	crazy
on the off-chance	by luck
pane	single piece of glass in a window
peeling	layer coming away from the wall
plump	soft
pop	jump out suddenly
pop in	enter quickly, informally
porch	covered entrance of exterior door
rim	edge, side
rings a bell	sounds familiar
sip	drink slowly, delicately (especially when hot)
swamp	overwhelm; too much of something
swanky	expensive and snobbish
teeny weeny	extremely little
tiny	very little
tray	flat receptacle for carrying cups, plates etc
trot	walk quickly (implies unconcerned way of walking)
undergraduate	University student studying for first degree
whiff	slight smell