Myself and Other Reflexive Pronouns

"I myself have done that."
"Jim, Susie, and myself were planning a trip."
"He wasn't even sure himself how to go about it."
"You need to give that to myself when you are done."
"They decided just to do that theirselves."

Which ones are correct? Which ones are unacceptable? Why?

The words "myself," "himself," "herself," "ourselves," and "themselves" are reflexive pronouns. Reflexive use is not often addressed in grammar books. We find present, past, future, and perfect tenses. And we find the various cases of pronouns. Both of those are enough to keep the average person confused! Then the "myself" word rears its ugly head and there are few books that offer rules for its use. Let me offer some guidelines.

First, there are no such words as "hisself" or "theirselves." The correct reflexive forms for "him" and "them" use the objective case and become "himself" and "themselves." A good way to remember this is that the word "remember" has "m's" in it. "Himself" and "themselves" both have "m's." Another memory tool is to substitute "him" or "them" in the following sentence: "Give it to HIM." You would not say "Give it to HIS." That is because "him" and "them" are objective case and "his" and "their" are possessives.

Second, reflexive use reinforces the subject. That means there must BE a subject. For instance, the sentence "I myself have done the very same thing" is correct. "I" is the subject. The word "myself" reinforces that you are talking about no one else other than the "I" that is the subject. It is also correct to use the reflexive in third person, as in the sentence "The boss herself told me I could do that." Again, there is a subject that is being reinforced. "The boss" is the subject. "Told" is the verb. You would have a sentence even if the reflexive word "herself," were removed, i.e. "The boss told me." Adding the word "herself" is for emphasis.

Consider the sentence "Paula, Tim, and myself went to
the show." Since "Paula, Tim, and myself" comprise the subject, they must be in nominative case. Myself is NEVER nominative. It can never be a subject. Therefore, the sentence should read, "Paula, Tim, and I went to the show." If the author of the sentence wishes to add emphasis to the "I," then the sentence can read, "Paula, Tim, and I myself went to the show."

It IS correct, however, to use reflexive pronouns in objective case instances such as indirect object or direct object.

Here are examples:

I hurt myself. ("I" is subject. "Hurt" is the verb. "Myself" is the direct object.)

I gave myself a manicure. ("I" is subject. "Gave" is the verb. "Manicure" is the direct object. "Myself" is the indirect object.)

Lastly, the words "myself," "himself," "herself," "ourselves," and "themselves" can also be used as objects of prepositions. Examples are "She did that by herself" or "He did that to himself." It can, however, become confusing when the preposition is "understood." In the sentence, "She did that herself," it is understood that a preposition precedes "herself." With the elliptical preposition in place, the sentence might read "She did that BY herself." Note that these instances are with objects of prepositions that are used in adverbial phrases. The phrases answer the question "how." Adverbs can also answer the questions "when," "where," and "why." Reflexive pronouns are normally not used in sentences where the adverbial phrase answers any other question than "how." For instance, it is not considered standard grammar to say "He gave it to myself. " Correct usage would be "He gave it to me."
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Here are some practice exercises. Write C by the sentences that are correct. Rewrite the sentences that have errors.

1. Sam, Tim, and myself are headed camping now.

2. Give the paperwork to myself.

3. She accomplished that work all by herself.

4. They were concerned for theirselves in such an unsafe situation.

5. He just has to fix that hisself.

6. I want him to do the job himself.

7. I myself believe that also.

8. The players themselves are willing to clean the field.

9. She asked herself some probing questions.

10. He gave hisself a good lecture.

11. Sammy gave a copy of that memo to Jim, Tom, and myself.

12. Elizabeth sang quietly to herself.