

Reflexive Pronouns and Possessive Adjectives

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Morphology of the Third Person Reflexive Pronoun:

(Note: Latin uses the regular personal pronouns reflexively in the first and second person: “ego mē videō” and “tū tē vidēs”)

Nominative:	XXXXXXXXXX
Genitive:	suī
Dative:	sibī
Accusative:	sē
Ablative:	sē

Special Note on the Third Person Reflexive Pronoun:

This reflexive pronoun refers back to any third person subject, so it can mean himself, herself, itself or themselves, depending on the subject.

Possession by the Reflexive Third Person:

The genitive of *suī*, *sibī* etc., like the genitive of the other personal pronouns is **not** used to express possession. It is used, instead, only in partive expressions like “pars suī” meaning “part of himself/ herself/itself/ themselves” and in objective expressions like “amore suī” meaning “with love of himself/herself etc.”

To express possession reflecting back to the third person subject, the possessive adjective, **suus**, **sua**, **suum** is used. Like all adjectives, it agrees with the gender, number and case of the noun which it modifies. Since it reflects possession by the third-person subject it will be translated as “his own”, “her own”, “its own” or “their own” depending on whether the subject could be called “he”, “she” “it” or “they.” Thus “puella fratrem suum” would mean “The girl verbs her own brother”.

To express possession by a third person who is not the subject, the genitive of the demonstrative adjective is used. Thus eius, huius, illius, or istius can mean his, her, or its and eōrum, eārum, hōrum, hārum, illōrum, illārum, istōrum and istārum can all mean their. These forms do **not** agree with the noun possessed. Thus, “puella fratrem eius” means “The girl verbs his/her/its brother” and “puella eōrum/eārum fratrem” means “The girl verbs their brother.” In both sentences, the object is the brother of someone other than the subject.