

Self-verbs in English

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This study is of two parts: theoretical and practical. The theoretical part is about a group of verbs in English for which the researcher chooses the term *self*- verbs. These verbs are formed by attaching *self*- to certain verbal bases. The practical side is a list of *self*-prefixed verbs from Wiktionary the free dictionary. The study tries to raise questions like: Are *self*-verbs the result of affixation or compounding? Is the combining form *self*- of relevance to the syntax of these verbs? What kind of meaning may *self*- add to these verbs? Can the form *self*- be attached to all verbs? Is such attachment is productive? The steps followed in conducting this study are: establishing an appropriate theoretical account of *self*- verbs, choosing a free online list of *self*-words from Wiktionary where *self*-verbs are only extracted, detecting any possible change in the syntax of these verbs before and after adding *self*- to them and explaining *self*-productivity regarding these verbs. It is concluded that attaching *self*- to some of these verbs may affect their syntax. For example, they may change from transitive, before adding *self*-, into intransitive after adding *self*-. With other *self*-verbs, attaching *self*- seems neutral to their syntax. As for productivity, the rule of attaching *self*- seems to be of little formal generality, no regular formality but still it has semantic regularity.

Keywords: deverbal, semi-prefix, detransitivization, verbal reflexive, modification.

1- Introduction

The form *self* is usually a free form that can combine with pronouns in English to form reflexive pronouns like *myself*, *himself*, *herself*, *ourselves*, *themselves*, *yourself* and *itself*. Occasionally, this same form can be a bound form that can be attached to certain noun or adjective bases¹ like *self-assessment*, *self-denial*, *self-centered*, *self-aware*. In these and many other examples, *self* has shifted its status from independently occurring form into a dependent one. This shift in the morphological status of *self*- from free form into bound one can be discerned in verbal bases as well (*self-harm*, *self-correct*, *self-synchronize*).

As far as the researcher knows, *self*-prefixed verbs are only approached by Mackenzie (2018) where he uses the framework of Functional Discourse Grammar. In his treatment, Mackenzie (ibid.) compares the use of *self*-prefixed verbs with their corresponding reflexive structure for example:

- The men asked if they didn't get to *self-identify*.
- The men asked if they didn't get to *identify themselves* as gay.

Mackenzie (ibid.: 74)

As for this study, it concentrates on comparing the syntax of certain verbs before prefixing *self*- and these same verbs after prefixing that prefix. That is, *self*-relevance to the syntax of these verbs will be explained. An example of this is comparing *harm* and *self-harm* where *self*- is being attached to the verbal base *harm*. It has been noticed that *harm* is a transitive verb as in *Pollution can harm marine life* (Hornby, 2015: 717). Still, once the combining form *self*- attaches to *harm*, it will be intransitive *As a teenager I was self-harming regularly*.

What is more, this study discusses *self-verbs* which Mackenzie (ibid. :93) does not mention, i.e., 31 *self-verbs* are introduced in this study. Other areas not covered by Mackenzie's study are whether *self-verbs* are the result of derivation or compounding, semantic constraints on *self*-attachment to verbs and elaboration of productivity in *self-verbs*.

2- The Data

A category entitled -English words prefixed with *self*-ll from Wiktionary constitutes the data of this study. Wiktionary is a multilingual dictionary written in collaborative manner by people around the world. This project started in December 2002 and it is still going on. It tries to describe all words in all languages of the world. Wiktionary has grown beyond a standard dictionary, i.e., it is too advanced

¹ Following Bussmann (1996:1013), base here is taken to be synonymous with root and free morpheme.

since it is multilingual and it includes not only the definition of a certain word but also whatever information necessary to understand that word like etymologies, pronunciations, sample quotations, synonyms, antonyms, translations, etc. Besides, it includes 6,227, 857 entries. This study makes use of the English version of Wikitionary and in particular a category in that version that lists English words prefixed with *self-*. This category is of 200 pages including verbs, adjectives and nouns. The category is alphabetically ordered and can be logged into through (https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Category:English_words_prefixed_with_self). It is visited in 10/16/2019. For the present study, only verbs prefixed with *self-* are extracted from this category. There are 37 *self-*prefixed verbs in that list given in Appendix A. Every *self-*prefixed verb can be logged into to see its own entry. The entry for each verb may give information like alternative forms of this verb (if there is any), its etymology, pronunciation, derived terms (if there is any), sample quotations and whether this verb is transitive, intransitive or both. These entries are given in Appendix B.

In addition, the researcher consults Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary (2015) as a standard reference to the syntax of these same *self-*prefixed 37 verbs before attaching *self-*.

3- *Self-Verbs: Affixation or Composition*

As mentioned earlier, *self-* in these verbs is not the same *self* that can be detected in reflexive pronouns. In the latter, *self* is a free-existing form that is combined with these free-existing pronouns. Thus, the formation of reflexive pronouns in English is a process of composition or compounding. As for the formation of *self-* verbs, here *self-* is no more free as it is indicated by the hyphen. It seems that *self-* belongs to what Bussmann (1996:1052) calls –semi-affix which is claimed to be:

Cover term for all affix-like derivational elements that also exist as independently occurring stems. The criteria for classifying elements caught up in this transition from free to bound status are a series formation (fireproof, waterproof, winterproof) and a generalization of meaning.

The form *self-* is indeed a semi-affix, or rather a semi-prefix, since it fulfills the two criteria above. The first one is that of series formation where *self-* can be found in the formation of other verbs like *self-actualize*, *self-annihilate*, *self-colonize*, *self-congratulate*, *self-correct*. The second one is that of generalized meaning where *self-* is denoting the meaning of doing something to or by oneself (reflexivity) or something performing automatically (See p.9).

Accordingly, *self*-verbs are a clear case of derivation where *self*- is being prefixed to another free morpheme or base. It is not a case of composition or compounding since the latter conditions that both constituents of the resulting verb to be free. The only exception in the list of the *self*-verbs is *self-destruct* since this verb is a case of backformation. This is because, according to Quirk et al. (1985: 1579), there is no verb like *destruct* in English in order to attach *self*- to it. But there is the noun *destruction* to which *self*- can attach resulting in *self-destruction* which is then backformed into *self-destruct*.

Following Haspelmath (2002:69), the researcher assumes that *self*-verbs can be called –deverbal verbs since they are derived from verbs. The only exception in the list is the verb *self-pleasure* where *self*- is attached to the noun *pleasure* to derive that verb.

From word formation point of view, the formation of *self*-verbs is a case of ‘modification’. Bussmann (1995:757) defines the latter as –semantic differentiation of the base morpheme through word formation morphemes, especially through prefixes. In this process, the original word class (in contrast to transposition) can remain the same: fix vs prefix.. That is, the prefix *self*- modifies the meaning of these verbs by adding the meanings of doing something to or by oneself or performing something automatically though no change in the word class or lexical category of these *self*-verbs can be shown. These *self*-prefixed words are still verbs.

Thus, it is thought that *self*- is a special type of derivational prefixes which Booij (2005:54) calls –categoryneutral. It is accustomed that derivational affixes change the lexical category of the word to which it is attached. Still, what is noticeable with *self*- in these verbs is that such a prefix has no effect whatever on the lexical category of these verbs.

4- Self- and its Relevance to Syntax: Detransitivization and Neutralization

In this section, it is argued that the derivation of *self*-verbs by prefixing *self*- to certain verbs is relevant to the syntax of these verbs. To elaborate, Haspelmath (ibid. :70-72, 77) mentions the dichotomy approach to morphology. Adherents to this approach claim that derivation and inflection are disconnected parts of morphology. They formulate a number of criteria to distinguish these two. One and the most important criterion is that inflection matters to syntax while derivation has nothing to do with syntax. Haspelmath disagrees with this specific criterion assuming that –the two lexemes construct and construction have a very similar meaning, but they differ considerably in their syntactic behaviour.. That is,

construction is derived from *construct* by suffixing –tion and due to this derivation their distribution will differ in sentences like *The Arabs constructed the bridge* in contrast with *the construction of the bridge by the Arabs*. In other words, derivation in this case and other cases is of relevance to syntax.

Regarding this study, it attempts to explain another case in which derivation is of relevance to syntax. It is the case of *self*-verbs in the wikitionary list. To elaborate, it is previously mentioned that these verbs are derived from verbal bases by prefixing *self*-. Before attaching *self*-, some of these verbal bases can be transitive or both transitive and intransitive. After adding *self*-, some of these *self*-derived verbs have become intransitive (specifically 8 *self*-verbs). For example, the verb *create* is usually transitive as in *The main purpose of industry is to **create** wealth* (Hornby, 2015: 360). Once this verb is prefixed with *self*-, it will be intransitive as in *To be is to **self-create**, renovate and endure* (see Appendix B). Another example is the verb *self-perfect* which can be transitive as in *As a young musician, she has spent ten years **perfecting** her technique* (ibid. :1141). After prefixing *self*-, this verb is changed into intransitive *Humanity **self-perfects** and will **self-perfect*** (See appendix B). The same is with *self-refute*. The verb *refute* is usually transitive *she **refutes** any suggestion that she behaved unprofessionally* (ibid. :1296). On the other hand, *self-refute* is used intransitively in *Moreover it is philosophical suicide, since it **self-refutes*** (See appendix B). The verb *self-select* is also intransitive in *On the other hand, gapping is inhibited by the fact that current speaker may select next speaker or may continue his turn should no one **self-select**, by the fact that self-selectors are encouraged to begin early in the current speaker's turn to plan for the start of their own turn* (See appendix B) while the verb *select* alone is usually transitive ***Select** what you want from the options available* (ibid.:1403). Other verbs with the same change in syntax from transitive into intransitive are *self-immolate*, *self-incriminate* and *self-injury*. Another case is found with *self-normalize*. The verb *normalize* can be both transitive and intransitive *A lotion to **normalize** oily skin and it took time until the political situation had **normalized*** (ibid. : 1050). Being prefixed with *self*-, the verb is changed into intransitive *As one **self-perfects** (**self-normalizes**), the motivation to do evil diminishes, and the ease with which one does what is good increases*.

A different case of syntactic relevance is found with *self-insert*. The verb *insert* is usually transitive as in *Later, he **inserted** another paragraph into his will and they **inserted** a tube in his mouth to help him breathe* (ibid. : 812). Once this verb is prefixed with *self*-, it can be both *The character looks like Goldman and is voiced by him, so critics said he was **self-inserting** himself into a romantic situation with an underage character and In Oregon, a group called Ceek*

*Women's Health has begun clinical trials for a series of new devices—including [...] a speculum that patients can **self-insert*** (See appendix B).

In other different cases, *self-* can be found neutral to the syntax of some other self-prefixed verbs like *self-identify*. Here it can be said that *identify* can be used transitively and intransitively in *First of all we must **identify** the problems area* and *I didn't enjoy the book because I couldn't **identify** with any of the main characters* (Hornby, 2015:778). The prefixed verb *self-identify* can also be transitive and intransitive respectively in *Among those who **self-identified** themselves as Native Americans, 80 percent of them had white ancestors, along with 20 percent for blacks, Hispanics, and Asians* and *In this instance, 70% of Jews **self-identify** as leaning to or members of the Democratic party* (See appendix B). Another verb is *self-sabotage* which maintains its use as transitive even after being attached with *self-*. Examples are *Protesters fail to **sabotage** the peace talks* and *The rise in interest rates sabotage any chance of the firm recovery* (ibid. :1364). The prefixed verb *self-sabotage* remains transitive as in *Before we even get started trying to explain this complicated concept of why we **self-sabotage** our own success, please understand that I am at best an "armchair doctor* (See appendix B).

The change from transitive into intransitive can be best explained in the light of what Lichtenberk (1999: 113-114) calls a prototypical reflexive situation where –a participant acts on himself or herself, rather than any other. Even more, Lichtenberk speaks of –reflexive markers of these reflexive situations where English is assumed to have a kind of reflexive marker called nominal reflexive. That is, English uses elements like *himself*, *herself* and *themselves* that show the same variations of pronouns like variation of number and gender as in *The man killed himself*. Then, Lichtenberk (ibid.) mentions another reflexive marker called –verbal reflexive. In the latter, the marker is assumed to be –part of the morphology associated with verbs (an affix, a clitic or a particle). He gives a dialect of Rwanda called Nkore-Kiga that uses a prefix on the verb as a reflexive marker. It is noticed that English can also use a verbal reflexive marker in *self-* verbs where the prefix *self-* is added to certain verbs to yield what the researcher may call verbal reflexives in English.

5- Semantic Constrains on Prefixing Self- to Verbs

One of the questions this study tries to answer is whether *self-* can be prefixed to all verbs. Following Carstairs-McCarthy (2002:91), there are ways in which –meaning can interact with derivation. That is, if a verb is to be derived by prefixing *self-* to a certain verbal base, then the meaning of that verbal base should

accept the meaning of doing something to oneself or reflexivity expressed by the prefix *self-*.

In Bussmann (1996:1288)'s own words, this section is after a –description of the semantic aspects of the processes involved in word formation especially in the formation of *self*-verb words. According to Cruse (2006:150), one meaning of reflexivity which is expressed by reflexive pronouns is that there is some kind of –self-directed action involved. For example, a verb like *kill* can be used with reflexive pronouns like *Tom killed himself*. By analogy, this same verb can accept the reflexivity or self-directed action expressed by prefixing *self-* and the result is the derived verb *self-kill* with the meaning of *to kill oneself*.

In addition, Booij (2005:67) describes the semantic impact caused by prefixes as-type coercion where –the prefix forces the base verb to belong to a particular semantic type of verbs, and thus imposes a particular interpretation on the prefixed verb as a whole. As for the prefix *self-* and by virtue of type coercion, it causes certain verbs to belong to the semantic type of reflexivity (or someone doing something to or by oneself) and something performing actions automatically (See p.9)

Still, Eastwood (1994:239) claims that some verbs in sentences like *We'll have to get up early*, *Won't you sit down?*, *I feel so helpless* cannot take reflexive pronouns. In other words, these verbs in these sentences cannot be self-directed expressing that the action is directed to the subject of the sentences himself. Other verbs that cannot take reflexive pronouns are *afford*, *approach*, *complain*, *concentrate*, *feel + adjective*, *get up*, *hurry (up)*, *lie down*, *relax*, *remember*, *rest*, *sit down*, *stand up*, *wake up*, *wonder*, *worry*. Again by analogy, it seems that such verbs also refuse the meaning of reflexivity expressed by prefixing *self-* to them as in **self-complain*, **self-remember*, **self-get up*, **self-lie down*, *self-rest*, *self-worry*. This is because their meaning is incapable of being reflexivized or self- reflected. That is, normally one cannot approach himself or get himself up.

To elaborate more, Richards and Schmidt (1995: 993) comment on reflexivity saying it is — Property of syntactic constructions where two arguments of an action or relationship described by a single predicate have identical reference. Reflexivity can be expressed by a reflexive pronoun (Philip hurt himself) or by verbal affixes, as in Dyirbal (Australian languages): in bayi buybayir-he hides (himself). Accordingly, the verbs above cannot participate in a reflexive construction (whether with a reflexive pronoun or a prefix like *self-*) in which the subject and object are referring to the same person or entity. Thus, verbs like **self-complain*,

*self-remember, *self-get up, *self-lie down are irreflexive verbs since they express a relation that cannot be self-oriented.

6- The Productivity of the Prefix *Self-*

As mentioned previously, *self*-verbs are the result of the word formation process of derivation especially prefixation. Like any other word formation processes, *self*-verbs derivation is either productive or unproductive. It is worth mentioning that Meckanzie (2018:74) claims that –self-prefixation of verbs is a process that is still establishing itself in the language and is far from being fully productive. This claim is going to be elaborated on focusing on what productivity in *self*-verbs may imply.

This study tries to show what could be a suitable verbal base for the prefix *self-*. In other words, it explains what could be an actual verb and a possible verb for this prefix. Following Haspelmath (2002:265,273), an actual word is –a lexeme that exists in the lexicon while a possible word is –a lexeme that could be formed according to the word-formation rules. It is thought that all the *self*-verbs in the list are possible words for the morphological rule of prefixing *self-* since none of them is listed in standard dictionaries like Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2015) except for *self-harm* and *self-destruct*.

According to Carstairs-McCarthy (2002:85, 88), productivity can be either productivity in shape or productivity in meaning. It is assumed that productivity in shape means –formal generality and regularity. A derivational process will be said to be formally general if it exploits –all or nearly all potential bases without leaving gaps (ibid. :143). As for *self*-prefixing, this derivational process can be thought to be not entirely general since not all English verbs can be prefixed with *self-* like *self-stand up and *self-remember. Thus, these two verbs represent what is meant by gaps. Regarding formal regularity, it has to do with –the characteristic that the kind of base to which the process can apply can be relatively precisely specified (ibid.). *Self*-prefixing cannot be formally regular and the reason is the verbal bases with which this prefix may combine have no specific or characterizing structure. In the Wiktionary list in appendix B, it is noted that 20 *self*-prefixed verbs out of the total 37 verbs are two-syllable words like *self-deport*, *self-excite*, *self-reflect*, *self-sabotage*, *self-supply*. The rest is 9 of the monosyllabic type like *self-deal*, *self-harm*, *self-kill*, 5 of the three-syllable type like *self-determine*, *self-immolate*, *self-synchronize* and 3 of the four-syllable type like *self-actualize*, *self-annihilate*, *self-incriminate*. As a result, no special structure is assigned to these *self*-prefixed verbs. Even on the phonological level, no determining stress pattern is given to these *self*-prefixed verbs. That is, out of the total 37 *self*-prefixed verbs

there are 12 *self*-prefixed verbs with stress on their first syllable, 17 *self*-prefixed verbs being stressed on the second and the remainder 9 verbs are with no specific stress pattern.

As for productivity in meaning or semantic regularity, Carstairs-McCarthy (ibid.: 88) assumes that derivational processes can be described as semantically regular if –if the meaning of the lexemes produced by it is uniform and consistent. It is observed that the verbs derived by *self*-prefixing seem to have meaning which is not varying and almost found as nearly stable in all these verbs (see appendix B). Following Sinclair (1993:149-150), the prefix *self*- are used to form words that refer or describe –actions that people do to or by themselves or reflexivity and –an object, especially a machine, that performs an action automatically.

The first shade of meaning is found in verbs like *self-annihilate* means (To annihilate oneself by one's own act), *self-correct* (To correct itself without outside assistance). Even if the verb has two meanings, the meaning of actions that people do to or by themselves will be retained. This seems obvious in *self-edit* where this verb has the meanings (To censor oneself; to stop oneself from saying certain things) and ((*authorship*) To edit one's own writing while it is being written). The same is with *self-select* where the two meanings (To make a choice for oneself) and (To take one's turn in a conversation by electing to speak) can reflect the first meaning of *self*-. Even more, if the *self*-verb has three meanings the meaning of this prefix will be there in all of them. This is clear in *self-insert* that has the meanings of (To insert oneself), (To insert something into one's own body) and (To insert one's own person into a story as a character). (See appendix B)

The second meaning of the prefix *self*-, an object, especially a machine, that performs an action automatically, can be found in *self-correct* that means (*of a device or system*) To correct itself without outside assistance, *self-excite* which means (To energize or excite (the field magnets of a dynamo) by induction from the residual magnetism of its cores, leading all or a part of the current thus produced through the field-magnet) and *self-soar* with the meaning of (To use the normal launching method for a hang glider). (See appendix B)

7- Conclusions

1- *Self*-verbs in the chosen data are the result of derivation not compounding since in these verbs the form *self* is no more free. It has become an affix, of the prefix type, as indicated by the hyphen. The only exception here is *self-destruct* where the verb is the result of backformation.

- 2- *Self-* in these verbs is a semi-prefix due to its contribution in deriving these verbs and assigning the meaning of someone doing something by oneself or something doing some actions automatically.
- 3- These *self*-verbs can be described as deverbal because of that fact the bases to which *self-* is attached when deriving these verbs are also verbal.
- 4- *Self-* here can be described as neutral when it comes to the class of the derived words since it does not change the class of the resulting verbs. *Self*-verbs are still verbs.
- 5- This prefix can be proved to be of relevance to the syntax of some *self*-derived verbs. That is, after *self*-attachment these verbs change from transitive into intransitive. These are 8 verbs out of the total 37 verbs in the list like *self-create*, *self-perfect*, *self-refute*, *self-select*.
- 6- With other verbs like *self-identify* and *self-sabotage*, *self-* seems neutral as far as their syntax is concerned.
- 7- *Self*-verbs can be seen as verbal reflexives in English besides the regular nominal reflexives represented by the reflexive pronouns.
- 8- The meanings expressed by *self-* like reflexivity (or self-directed actions) and performing something automatically impose constraints on deriving some *self-* prefixed verbs like **self-remember*.
- 9- Most of the *self*-verbs in the list give the meaning of reflexivity or someone doing something to or by oneself.
- 10- The derivation of *self*-verbs may not be totally general due to the gaps caused by verbs like **self-stand up*, **self-approach*, **self-complain*.
- 11- *Self*-verbs derivation can't be formally regular since there is no specific syllable pattern or stress pattern that may characterize the verbs to which *self-* may be attached.
- 12- The derivation of *self*-verbs can be semantically regular since the meaning endowed by this prefix to these verbs can be relatively similar. This meaning is

either of self-directed action (reflexivity) or something performing some actions automatically.

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Appendices

Appendix A: the 37 extracted self-verbs are from https://en.Wiktionary.org/wiki/Category:English_words_prefixed_with_self) and it is visited in 10/16/2019.

- 1-Self-actualize
- 2-Self-annihilate
- 3-Self- colonize
- 4-Self- correct
- 5-Self-create
- 6-Self-deal
- 7-Self-deport
- 8-Self-destruct
- 9-Self-determine
- 10-Self-edit
- 11-Self-excite
- 12-Self-handicap
- 13-Self-harm
- 14- Self-heal
- 15- Self-identify
- 16-Self-immolate
- 17-Self-incriminate
- 18-Self-injury
- 19-Self-insert
- 20-Self- kill
- 21-Self-medicate
- 22-Self-normalize
- 23-Self-perfect
- 24-Self-pleasure
- 25-Self-pollute
- 26-Self-publish
- 27-Self-rape
- 28-Self-redress
- 29-Self-reflect
- 30-Self-refute
- 31-Self-sabotage



32-Self-seed
33-Self-select
34-Self-soar
35-Self-suck

36-Self -supply

37-Self-synchronize

Appendix B: the entries

1-Alternative forms[[edit](#)]

- [self-actualise](#)

Etymology[[edit](#)]

[self-](#) + [actualize](#)

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-actualize (*third-person singular simple present [self-actualizes](#), present participle [self-actualizing](#), simple past and past participle [self-actualized](#)*)

1. To achieve [self-actualization](#); to reach one's personal peak of individual empowerment and fulfillment.

2- **Etymology[[edit](#)]**

[self-](#) + [annihilate](#)

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-annihilate (*third-person singular simple present [self-annihilates](#), present participle [self-annihilating](#), simple past and past participle [self-annihilated](#)*)

1. To [annihilate](#) oneself by one's own act.

3-**Etymology[[edit](#)]**

[self-](#) + [correct](#)

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-correct (*third-person singular simple present [self-corrects](#), present participle [self-correcting](#), simple past and past participle [self-corrected](#)*)



1. *(of a device or system)* To correct itself without outside assistance

Derived terms[edit]

- self-correcting

- [self-correction](#)

4-Etymology[\[edit\]](#)

[self-](#) + [create](#)

Verb[\[edit\]](#)

self-create (*third-person singular simple present* [self-creates](#), *present participle* [self-creating](#), *simple past and past participle* [self-created](#))

1. (intransitive) To [create](#) [itself](#).
*To be is to **self-create**, renovate, and endure*

5-Etymology[\[edit\]](#)

From [self-](#) + [deal](#).

Verb[\[edit\]](#)

self-deal (*third-person singular simple present* [self-deals](#), *present participle* [self-dealing](#), *simple past and past participle* [self-dealt](#))

1. To deal with oneself. (Can we add an [example](#) for this sense?)
2. To engage in dealings favorable to oneself as principal, taking advantage of one's position as [fiduciary](#).

6- Etymology[\[edit\]](#)

[self-](#) + [deport](#)

Verb[\[edit\]](#)

self-deport (*third-person singular simple present* [self-deports](#), *present participle* [self-deporting](#), *simple past and past participle* [self-deported](#))



1. (*transitive*) To evict oneself, especially from a country.

7-Etymology[[edit](#)]

self- + destruct

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-destruct (*third-person singular simple present self-destructs, present participle self-destructing, simple past and past participle self-destructed*)

1. To destroy oneself.

Derived terms[[edit](#)]

- self-destruction

8-Etymology[[edit](#)]

self- + determine

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-determine (*third-person singular simple present self-determines, present participle self-determining, simple past and past participle self-determined*)

1. To make one's own decisions without outside interference. (Can we add an example for this sense?)

9-Etymology[[edit](#)]

self- + edit

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-edit (*third-person singular simple present self-edits, present participle self-editing, simple past and past participle self-edited*)

1. To censor oneself; to stop oneself from saying certain things.
2. (*authorship*) To edit one's own writing while it is being written.

10- Etymology[[edit](#)]

- self- + excite

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-excite (*third-person singular simple present self-excites, present participle self-exciting,*



simple past and past participle **self-excited**)

1. To energize or excite (the field magnets of a dynamo) by induction from the residual magnetism of its cores, leading all or a part of the current thus produced through the field-magnet coils.

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(See the entry for [self-excite](#) in [Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary](#), G. & C. Merriam, 1913.)

11- Etymology[[edit](#)]

[self-](#) + [excite](#)

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-excite (third-person singular simple present [self-excites](#), present participle [self-exciting](#), simple past and past participle [self-excited](#))

1. To [energize](#) or [excite](#) (the field magnets of a [dynamo](#)) by [induction](#) from the [residual magnetism](#) of its [cores](#), leading all or a part of the [current](#) thus produced through the field-magnet coils.

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(See the entry for [self-excite](#) in [Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary](#), G. & C. Merriam, 1913.)

12-Etymology[[edit](#)]

[self-](#) + [handicap](#)

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-handicap (third-person singular simple present [self-handicaps](#), present participle [self-handicapping](#), simple past and past participle [self-handicapped](#))

1. (*intransitive*) To [avoid](#) making an [effort](#), or to introduce [deliberate obstacles](#) to one's success, so as to prevent [potential failure](#) from hurting one's [self-esteem](#).

13- Etymology[[edit](#)]

From [self-](#) + [harm](#)



Verb[edit]

self-harm (*third-person singular simple present self-harms, present participle self-harming, simple past and past participle self-harmed*)

1. To harm oneself deliberately.

14- Etymology[[edit](#)]

self- + heal

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-heal (third-person singular simple present [self-heals](#), present participle [self-healing](#), simple past and past participle [self-healed](#))

1. (*intransitive*) To heal itself, or by itself. quotations ▲
 - **2015**, Sally J. Shim, *Be Mine: 25 Paper Projects to Share the Love* (page 18)
A **self-healing** cutting mat has a durable vinyl surface that bounces back from blade marks and cuts [...]

15- Etymology[[edit](#)]

From self- + identify.

Pronunciation[[edit](#)]

- IPA^(key): /ˌsɛlfaɪˈdɛntɪfaɪ/

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-identify (third-person singular simple present [self-identifies](#), present participle [self-identifying](#), simple past and past participle [self-identified](#))

1. (*transitive, chiefly in passive, or reflexive*) To identify (oneself) with a particular person or group, or as part of a particular group. [from 19th c.] quotations ▲
 - **1981**, Jiří Frel, *Roman Portraits in the J. Paul Getty Museum*, p. 112:
This is a new type of emperor; he is **self-identified** with the divinity, his celestial virtues legitimizing his power.
 - **2003**, Hiroshi Fukurai, Richard Krooth, *Race in the Jury Box*, p. 42:
Among those who **self-identified** themselves as Native American, 80 percent of them had white ancestors, along with 20 percent for blacks, Hispanics, and Asians.



-
2. (*intransitive*) To identify oneself as belonging to a particular group or category of people.
[from 20th c.] quotations ▲
- **2013**, Harry Enten, *The Guardian*, 2 October:
In this instance, 70% of Jews **self-identify** as leaning to or members of the Democratic party.

 - **2016**, Chris Lee, *The New York Times*, 13 May:
When it comes to love, Beth **self-identifies** as —a person who is attracted to both sexes,|| and is interested in upending conventional narratives.

16-Etymology[[edit](#)]

self- + immolate

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-immolate (*third-person singular simple present [self-immolates](#), present participle [self-immolating](#), simple past and past participle [self-immolated](#)*)

1. (*[intransitive](#)*) To set oneself on fire, especially as a form of [protest](#).

17-Etymology[[edit](#)]

self- + incriminate

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-incriminate (*third-person singular simple present [self-incriminates](#), present participle [self-incriminating](#), simple past and past participle [self-incriminated](#)*)

1. (*[intransitive](#)*) To [incriminate](#) oneself.

18- Etymology[[edit](#)]

From self- + injure.

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-injure (*third-person singular simple present [self-injures](#), present participle [self-injuring](#),*

simple past and past participle [self-injured](#))

1-(*[intransitive](#)*) To commit [self-injury](#)

19-Etymology[[edit](#)]

Verb[[edit](#)]



self-insert (*third-person singular simple present self-inserts, present participle self-inserting, simple past and past participle self-inserted*)

1. To insert oneself. quotations ▲

- 2000, Alastair Reynolds, *Revelation Space*:

For centuries, the commonest forms of implant had either been grown *in situ* or were designed to **self-insert** painlessly via existing orifices [...]

2. To insert something into one's own body. quotations ▲

- **2018** October 5, Arielle Pardes, —The Speculum Finally Gets a Modern Redesign, in *Wired*^[3]:

In Oregon, a group called Ceek Women's Health has begun clinical trials for a series of new devices—including [...] a speculum that patients can **self-insert**.

3. (*fandom slang*) To insert one's own person into a story as a character. quotations ▲

- **2017** June 1, Beth Elderkin, —This Creepy Powerpuff Girls Theory Isn't True, Thank God!, in *Gizmodo*^[4]:

The character looks like Goldman and is voiced by him, so critics said he was **self-inserting** himself into a romantic situation with an underage character.

20-Alternative forms[[edit](#)]

- [selfkill](#), [self kill](#)

Etymology[[edit](#)]

From [self-](#) + [kill](#). compare [Old English](#) [selfcwalu](#) (—suicide, self-slaughter^l).

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-kill (*third-person singular simple present* [self-kills](#), *present participle* [self-killing](#), *simple past and past participle* [self-killed](#))

1. (*transitive, intransitive*) To [kill](#) oneself; [commit suicide](#). quotations ▲

- **1904**, Dickinson School of Law, *Penn State law review*:

As his self-killing would not have been murder, his acts done in order to **self-kill** are not an attempt to murder.

- **1995**, Gavin Fairbairn, *Contemplating suicide*:

It might be suggested that if it is possible to think of the acts of people such as John and the young clerk, who kill themselves to wreak revenge on others, as falling short of suicide though they intentionally **self kill**, [...]

21-Etymology[[edit](#)]

[self-](#) + [medicate](#)



Verb[edit]

self-medicate (*third-person singular simple present self-medicates, present participle self-medicating, simple past and past participle self-medicated*)

1. To consume a substance as a medication without the advice of a physician, in order to treat a real or imagined condition.

22- Etymology[[edit](#)]

self- + normalize

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-normalize (*third-person singular simple present [self-normalizes](#), present participle [self-normalizing](#), simple past and past participle [self-normalized](#)*)

1. to [normalize](#) itself; to bring itself to normalized condition quotations ▲
 - 2001, M. C. Dillon, [Beyond Romance](#)
"As one self-perfects (**self-normalizes**), the motivation to do evil diminishes, and the ease with which one does what is good increases

23-Etymology [[edit](#)]

self- + perfect

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-perfect (*third-person singular simple present [self-perfects](#), present participle [self-perfecting](#), simple past and past participle [self-perfected](#)*)

1. To [perfect](#) itself; to [make](#) itself perfect. quotations ▲
 - 2014, Tristan Garcia, [Form and Object: A Treatise on Things](#)
"Humanity **self-perfects** and will **self-perfect**."
 - 2001, M. C. Dillon, [Beyond Romance](#)
"As one **self-perfects** (**self-normalizes**), the motivation to do evil diminishes, and the ease with which one does what is good increases."

24- Etymology[[edit](#)]

From self- + pleasure.

Verb[[edit](#)]



self-pleasure (*third-person singular simple present self-pleasures, present participle self-pleasuring, simple past and past participle self-pleasured*)

1. To pleasure oneself; masturbate.

25- Etymology[[edit](#)]

self- + pollute

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-pollute (third-person singular simple present **self-pollutes**, present participle **self-polluting**, simple past and past participle **self-polluted**)

1. (*historical, euphemistic*) To masturbate. [from 17th c.]

26-Alternative forms[[edit](#)]

- self-pub or selfpub

Etymology[[edit](#)]

self- + publish

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-publish (third-person singular simple present **self-publishes**, present participle **self-publishing**, simple past and past participle **self-published**)

1. (*authorship*) To publish a work independently, without the assistance of a publishing company.

27-Etymology[[edit](#)]

From self- + rape.

Pronunciation[[edit](#)]

- (*General American*) IPA^(key): /'self,ɪeɪp/, /,self'ɪeɪp/

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-rape (third-person singular simple present **self-rapes**, present participle **self-raping**, simple past and past participle **self-raped**)

1. (*rare*) To engage in an act of self-rape. quotations ▲
 - **2004** March 15, Electric Nachos, -HomophobiaII, in *rec.arts.fine*, *Usenet*:
And wouldn't it be reasonable to assume that psychiatrist's offices would be filled to the



ceiling with these **self-raping** homos pleading for help?

- **2011**, M. Middeke & Christina Wald, *The Literature of Melancholia: Early Modern to Postmodern*, →[ISBN](#), page 43:

Satan's pregnancy repeats the theme of melancholy and narcissism: he is 'self-impregnated, or **self-raped**, making love to himself and then to his daughter, the product of his incestuous mind' (Mulryan 18).

- **2012**, Nick Tosches, *Me and the Devil: A Novel*, →[ISBN](#):

Sweet **self-raped** Melissa had extracted them from the rest of the verse in a way that gave a very different impression and conjured a very different picture.

28- Etymology[[edit](#)]

From [self-](#) + [redress](#).

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-redress (*third-person singular simple present [self-redresses](#), present participle [self-redressing](#), simple past and past participle [self-redressed](#)*)

1. To [redress](#) a wrong against oneself; to take [revenge](#).

29- Etymology[[edit](#)]

[self-](#) + [reflect](#)

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-reflect (*third-person singular simple present [self-reflects](#), present participle [self-reflecting](#), simple past and past participle [self-reflected](#)*)

1. (*intransitive*) To engage in [reflection](#) about [oneself](#) and one's [life](#), etc.

Related terms[[edit](#)]

[self-reflection](#)

30-Etymology[[edit](#)]

[self-](#) + [refute](#)

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-refute (*third-person singular simple present [self-refutes](#), present participle [self-refuting](#), simple past and past participle [self-refuted](#)*)



1. (*intransitive*) (of an idea or theory) To prove itself false by showing that falsehood is a logical consequence of the act or situation of holding it to be true. quotations ▼
 - **2008**, Graham Dunstan Martin, Living on Purpose: Meaning, Intention, and Value
Moreover it is philosophical suicide, since it **self-refutes**.

31- Alternative forms[[edit](#)]

- [self sabotage](#), [selfsabotage](#)

Etymology[[edit](#)]

From [self-](#) + [sabotage](#).

Noun[[edit](#)]

self-sabotage ([uncountable](#))

1. The [sabotaging](#), whether consciously or subconsciously, of [oneself](#), one's own interests, plans etc.

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-sabotage (*third-person singular simple present [self-sabotages](#), present participle [self-sabotaging](#), simple past and past participle [self-sabotaged](#)*)

1. (*transitive*) To [sabotage](#) oneself or one's own plans. quotations ▲
 - o 2011, Greg Bennett, *Self Sabotage*:
Before we even get started trying to explain this complicated concept of why we **self-sabotage** our own success, please understand that I am at best an –armchair doctorl.

32-Etymology[[edit](#)]

From [self-](#) + [seed](#)

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-seed (*third-person singular simple present [self-seeds](#), present participle [self-seeding](#), simple past and past participle [self-seeded](#)*)

1. (*of a plant*) to [propagate](#) itself by [shedding](#) seeds

33-Etymology[[edit](#)]



self- + select

Verb[edit]

self-select (*third-person singular simple present self-selects, present participle self-selecting, simple past and past participle self-selected*)

1. To make a choice for oneself. quotations ▼

2. (*linguistics, intransitive*) To take one's turn in a conversation by electing to speak.
quotations ▲

- 1980, Mary Ritchie Key, *The Relationship of Verbal and Nonverbal Communication* (page 295)

On the other hand, gapping is inhibited by the fact that current speaker may select next speaker or may continue his turn should no one **self-select**, by the fact that self-selectors are encouraged to begin early in the current speaker's turn to plan for the start of their own turn, and by the fact that the current speaker, knowing that self-selectors will begin their self-selection at the earliest possible moment, is encouraged to select next speaker at an early point in his turn.

Related terms[[edit](#)]

- [self-selection](#)
- [self-selector](#)

34- Etymology[[edit](#)]

self- + soar

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-soar (third-person singular simple present [self-soars](#), present participle [self-soaring](#), simple past and past participle [self-soared](#))

1. To use the normal launching method for a hang glider.
*I'll **self-soar** today using my hang glider. Many intrepid flyers joined the 70s' Self-Soar Association [S-SA] that had "Otto" memberships and membership numbers in honor of Otto Lilienthal who self-soared off a hill he had built. The booklet series Low & Slow and the Hang Glider Weekly (together 216 editions) frequently used the term "**self-soar**" to describe flying using an unpowered glider flown after launching by some system without the aid of motors or other persons.*

35- Alternative forms[[edit](#)]

- [selfsuck](#), [self suck](#)

Etymology[[edit](#)]



From self- + suck.

Verb[edit]

self-suck (*third-person singular simple present self-sucks, present participle self-sucking, simple past and past participle self-sucked*)

1. Of a female farm animal: to drink its own milk.

2. to suck (on) oneself (Can we add an example for this sense?)
3. to perform autofellatio (Can we add an example for this sense?)

Derived terms[[edit](#)]

- self-sucker
- self-sucking

36- Etymology[[edit](#)]

self- + supply

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-supply (*third-person singular simple present self-supplies, present participle self-supplying, simple past and past participle self-supplied*)

1. To provide water, electricity, etc. to one's own premises on a retail basis by obtaining a special license from the utility provider.

Derived terms[[edit](#)]

- self-supplier

37-Etymology[[edit](#)]

self- + synchronize

Verb[[edit](#)]

self-synchronize (*third-person singular simple present self-synchronizes, present participle self-synchronizing, simple past and past participle self-synchronized*)

1. (*of an oscillator in a group having different periods*) To adjust its period to that of an average of the group