Episode 073 – Grammar

The placement of reflexive pronouns in a sentence

The German reflexive pronoun "sich" can appear in different parts of a sentence. Usually it's close to the beginning, but in a main clause it follows the conjugated verb.

If the subject comes first in a sentence, the reflexive pronoun directly follows the conjugated verb.

Example:
Max hat sich in die Hose gemacht.

If the subject comes after the verb, then the reflexive pronoun can be placed either after the subject or the verb.

Example:
Gestern hat sich Max in die Hose gemacht.
Gestern hat Max sich in die Hose gemacht.

Note:
If the subject is a personal pronoun, then the reflexive verb must come after the subject!

Examples:
Gestern hat er sich in die Hose gemacht.

In a dependent clause, the reflexive verb usually appears right after the conjugation. But it can also follow the subject.
Examples:
Harry weiß, dass **sich Max** in die Hose gemacht hat.
Harry weiß, dass **Max sich** in die Hose gemacht hat.

**Note:**
In a dependent clause, the reflexive verb usually appears right after the conjugation. But it can also follow the subject.

Examples:
Harry weiß, dass **er sich** in die Hose gemacht hat.