
The Word Within the Word • List #23

egocentric	<i>(self-centered)</i>	The egocentric snob didn't notice who he hurt.
tangible	<i>(touchable)</i>	A paycheck is one of the tangible benefits of a job.
demagogue	<i>(corrupt politician)</i>	The demagogue played on public prejudices.
preclude	<i>(foreclose)</i>	Don't preclude that option.
cryptologist	<i>(code breaker)</i>	British cryptologists cracked the German code.
ethnocentrism	<i>(racial or cultural prejudice)</i>	We deplore his narrow ethnocentrism.
pedagogue	<i>(teacher)</i>	A humorless pedant is a poor pedagogue.
recant	<i>(retract)</i>	Galileo was forced to recant his heliocentric statements.
revoke	<i>(cancel)</i>	Permission to travel has been revoked.
pugnacious	<i>(combative)</i>	The pugnacious bully got his comeuppance.
incisive	<i>(sharp)</i>	Her incisive questions cut deeply into the issue.
diatribe	<i>(abusive criticism)</i>	The German leader delivered a diatribe against France.
anomaly	<i>(abnormality)</i>	There is an inexplicable anomaly in the data.
enumerate	<i>(to list)</i>	Please enumerate your reasons.
circumscribed	<i>(limited)</i>	You must choose among certain circumscribed alternatives.
intercede	<i>(mediate)</i>	We are forced to intercede on behalf of the orphan.
disputatious	<i>(argumentative)</i>	The disputatious reporter irritated the official.
loquacious	<i>(talkative)</i>	The loquacious fellow wore their ears out.
abrogate	<i>(annul)</i>	We abrogate an agreement only out of dire necessity.
prescience	<i>(foreknowledge)</i>	A prescient vision came to him in a dream.
sacrosanct	<i>(sacred)</i>	He would not endanger his sacrosanct bowling night.
androgynous	<i>(masculine and feminine)</i>	The androgynous rock star
acronym	<i>(initials-name)</i>	The acronym NATO means N. Atlantic Treaty Organization.
congenital	<i>(at birth)</i>	The problem is a congenital defect.
cacophony	<i>(bad noise)</i>	The cacophonous roar of the crowd was deafening.

auto

self • for oneself • by oneself

The Greek stem **auto** is one of the most interesting prefixes in the English language, since we are interested in things that we do by, for, and to ourselves. *Auto* is sometimes shortened to *aut* in words such as *autarchy* or changed to *auth* in words such as *authentic*. Here is a small selection of the interesting words that contain *auto*:

autarchy:	absolute rule. Eventually, the dictator's rule increased to a steely autarchy.
autogamy:	self-fertilization. The autogamous fungi reproduced rapidly.
autocephalous:	self-governing. The Orthodox churches had autocephalous organizations.
autochthon:	an aborigine. Australia has a menagerie of unique autochthonous species.
autonomic:	involuntary. The autonomic nervous system automatically regulates functions.
autopsy:	a coroner's examination. The autopsy revealed no evidence of foul play.
autocracy:	dictatorship. She wouldn't allow him to act as the autocrat in their marriage.
autonomist:	an advocate of self-rule. The autonomists were furious with the compromise.
autism:	a pathological introversion. His autism made it difficult to communicate.
automaton:	robot. He seemed like an automaton, answering with automatic flatness.
authentic:	genuine. It was not a replica, but an authentic artifact from the tomb.
autogenous:	self-generated. The body produces autogenous defenses against disease.
autotrophic:	self-nourishing. Plants are autotrophic through the process of photosynthesis.
autotelic:	being an end in itself. Art and astronomy are autotelic endeavors.
autodidact:	self-taught person. His discussion revealed the slight errors of the autodidact.
autograph:	one's own signature. Morrison autographed a copy of <i>Song of Solomon</i> .
autohypnosis:	self-hypnosis. She used autohypnotic states to control her fears.
autopilot:	automatic pilot. The plane flew on autopilot until the pilot was revived.
autobiography:	a self-biography. Watson's <i>Double Helix</i> is a fascinating autobiography.
autoinfection:	infection from within. The immune system no longer prevented autoinfections.
automate:	to make automatic. The factory had been automated, requiring fewer workers.

The Word Within the Word • Notes #23

1. Not every corrupt politician is a **demagogue**. A demagogue is a politician who leads—if you can call it that—through corrupt means: by telling people only what they want to hear, and by appealing to their prejudices. The demagogue often leads (agog) people (demo) by appealing to their basest instincts.
2. A Micropoem: To **preclude** an option is to prevent it in advance, to act so as not even to have a choice, to close (clud) that door beforehand (pre).
3. **Ethnocentrism** is the idea that your own group (ethno) is the metaphorical center (centri), and all other groups circle in inferior orbits around you. As human beings, we have a natural preference for the customs we know, and this sometimes gives rise to an illogical corollary: that the customs of other groups are not as good as our own. Anthropologists report that virtually all human groups exhibit some form of ethnocentrism.
4. A teacher is a leader (agog) of children (ped), a **pedagogue**.
5. When Galileo **recanted** his heliocentric views, he sang (cant) a different tune (re).
6. **Incisive** comments are sharp because they cut (cise) in (in) to the issue.
7. An **anomaly** is a special kind of abnormality. It is something so unusual that it is not (an) the same (homo). It is an an-homo-ly.
8. Why do we call a word made out of initials an **acronym**? It is a high (acro) name (nym) if you pull up the first letter of each word:

N	A	T	O
North	Atlantic	Treaty	Organization

9. A Micropoem: Why do we refer to limited options as **circumscribed**? When choices are circumscribed, a line has been drawn (scrib) around (circum) the proper choices, and you have to stay within the line. These things inside of the line you may do, the things outside of the line—you may not.
10. **Ten Pronunciation Tips**
 loquacious - low KWAY shuss
 enumerate - ee NOO merate
 prescience - PRESS ience
 androgynous - an DROJ enous
 cacophony - kah KOFF ony
 preclude - pree KLOOD
 tangible - TANJ ible
 egocentric - ee go CENT ric
 disputatious - dis pyoo TAY shuss
11. **Spanish Cognates:**

egocentric : egocéntrico	ethnocentrism : etnocentrismo
tangible : tangible	pedagogue : pedagogo
demagogue : demagogo	revoke : revocar
cryptologist : criptólogo	incisive : incisivo
enumerate : enumerar	intercede : interceder

The Word Within the Word • Classic Words #23

In each case below, one of the choices was really the word used by the author in the sentence provided. All of the choices can be found in the example words on the first page of this lesson. Your challenge is to decide which word the author used. This is not a test; it is more like a game, because more than one word choice may work perfectly well. See if you can use your sensitivity and intuition to guess correctly which word the author used. You may need a dictionary.

1. **From Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim***

It made the surly taciturn Tamb'Itam almost _____.

- a. pugnacious
- b. anomalous
- c. prescient
- d. loquacious

2. **From William Shakespeare's *The Tempest***

And by my _____ I find my zenith doth depend upon a most auspicious star.

- a. cacophony
- b. prescience
- c. acronym
- d. ethnocentrism

3. **From Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night***

For a second Jamie reacts _____ and half rises from his chair to do battle.

- a. pugnaciously
- b. egocentrically
- c. loquaciously
- d. anomalously

4. **From Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles***

That cold, _____, ironical voice could belong to but one man in all the world.

- a. circumscribed
- b. tangible
- c. incisive
- d. sacrosanct

5. **From Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows***

My life...feels to me today somewhat narrow and _____.

- a. cacophonous
- b. circumscribed
- c. precluded
- d. egocentric

The Word Within the Word • Mystery Spelling #23

egocentric	ego centri c
tangible	tang ible
demagogue	dem agog ue
preclude	pre clud e
cryptologist	crypt o log ist
ethnocentrism	ethno centr ism
pedagogue	ped agog ue
recant	re cant
revoke	re vok e
pugnacious	pugn aci ous
incisive	in cis ive
diatribe	dia trib e
anomaly	a nom aly
enumerate	e numer ate
circumscribed	circum scrib ed
intercede	inter cede
disputatious	dis put ati ous
loquacious	loqu aci ous
abrogate	ab rogat e
prescience	pre sci ence
sacrosanct	sacro sanct
androgynous	andro gyn ous
acronym	acro nym
congenital	con gen it al
cacophony	caco phon y

The Word Within the Word • Ideas #23

SYNTHESIS:

Which words on List #23 could be used to describe a grumpy, selfish person?

DIVERGENCE:

Which principles of American social and political life should remain sacrosanct? Which principles should be reexamined?

ANALYSIS:

Explain why the words **egocentric** and **androgynous** mean what they do.

EVALUATION:

Should student behavior in public secondary schools be more or less **circumscribed** than at present? What important learning decisions should belong to the administration, and what important decisions should belong to the students? Should students be allowed to make serious mistakes in order to have a vital learning experience?

INTUITION:

In a dream you receive a scathing **diatribe** from a stranger on the street. What breach of conduct have you committed to deserve this diatribe?

EMOTION:

What are your emotional reactions to someone who is **egocentric**? To someone who is **pugnacious**? To someone who is **loquacious**?

AESTHETICS:

Is all great music **euphonic**? Or is it possible to create a piece of great music that is partially or totally **cacophonous**? Can something that is not pleasing to hear or see still be considered art and be pleasing to the mind?