
The Word Within the Word • List #25

| | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| introspective | <i>(inward looking)</i> | The quiet boy is an introspective loner. |
| intervene | <i>(come between)</i> | We should not intervene in their dispute |
| syndrome | <i>(complex of symptoms)</i> | Down's syndrome has some well-known symptoms. |
| subordinate | <i>(lower)</i> | He resented his subordinate rank in the military. |
| dissonant | <i>(inharmonious)</i> | A dissonant clamor arose in the streets. |
| belligerent | <i>(warring)</i> | The belligerent nations refused to negotiate. |
| credible | <i>(believable)</i> | It takes money to become a credible candidate. |
| impending | <i>(overhanging)</i> | "The shadow of impending doom" is a trite phrase. |
| polyphonic | <i>(multi-melodic)</i> | Bach's polyphonic concertos are beautiful. |
| exculpate | <i>(free from blame)</i> | He wished to be completely exculpated. |
| euphemism | <i>(pleasant name)</i> | "Rest room" is a euphemism. |
| benefactor | <i>(helper)</i> | Who was the anonymous benefactor to little Pip? |
| megalomania | <i>(delusions of greatness)</i> | A Napoleon complex is a form of megalomania. |
| magnate | <i>(powerful person)</i> | The oil magnates in Saudi Arabia control billions. |
| vivacious | <i>(lively)</i> | Her vivacious personality cheered us all. |
| heliotropic | <i>(sun-following)</i> | The heliotropic vines clogged the window. |
| amour-propre | <i>(self-love)</i> | There is no lack of amour-propre in her! |
| octagenarian | <i>(an eighty-year-old)</i> | The spry octagenarian won the race. |
| cognoscenti | <i>(those who know)</i> | This wine is preferred by the cognoscenti. |
| surfeit | <i>(excess)</i> | He consumed a painful surfeit of food and drink. |
| primate | <i>(monkeys, apes, and humans)</i> | Were the higher primates made first? |
| pellucid | <i>(crystal clear)</i> | Pellucid waters and pellucid prose are equally beautiful. |
| circumvent | <i>(get around)</i> | It is unwise to circumvent the rules in prison. |
| hemiplegia | <i>(paralysis on one side)</i> | We helped the victim of hemiplegia. |
| narcolepsy | <i>(attacks of sleep)</i> | She suffered uncontrollable attacks of narcolepsy. |

micro

small • minute • enlarging

The Greek stem **micro** is one of the most interesting stems in the English language, because it often brings us face to face with another level of reality: the work of the very small. Although *micro* usually means small, it also can mean *abnormally little*, and it can even have an inverse meaning of *enlarging*, as in the word *microphone*, where it refers to enlarging sounds that are small. Here is a small selection of the interesting words that contain *micro*:

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| microbe: | a germ. In the end, the Martians were defeated not by war but by microbes. |
| micron: | one millionth of a meter. The microscope presented a vista of many microns. |
| microphyte: | microscopic plants. The creature was covered with parasitic microphytes. |
| microsome: | granules in the cytoplasm. The microsomes contribute to protein synthesis. |
| micrococcus: | spherical bacteria. The mass of micrococci fed on the dead protoplasm. |
| microeconomics: | economics of individuals. She studied consumers' microeconomic habits. |
| microdot: | a pinhead copy. The spy enlarged the text photographed in the microdot. |
| micrometeorite: | microscopic meteorite. Micrometeorites drift down to earth without burning. |
| mironutrient: | nutrients barely required. The micronutrient iron is needed in minute amounts. |
| microsecond: | one millionth of a second. The computer responded in microseconds. |
| microscopy: | use of a microscope. The criminal was caught through microscopy. |
| microtome: | instrument for cutting slices. A microtome cuts tissue for microscopic view. |
| microseism: | a small tremor. Microseisms too slight to feel occur almost every day. |
| microlith: | small flint tools. The mesolithic site contained firepits and microliths. |
| microprocessor: | microcomputer chip. The microprocessor's logic was printed on a silicon chip. |
| microcephaly: | of abnormally small cranium. The child was born microcephalic. |
| microevolution: | tiny hereditary changes. Microevolution created small differences in species. |
| microanalysis: | chemical analysis of small quantities. Microanalysis revealed the toxin. |
| microbus: | small motorbus. Arlo threw his guitar into the red VW microbus. |
| microcosm: | microscopic universe. The electron microscope found microcosms in the dust. |
| microbiology: | biology of microorganisms. Microbiological weapons were banned at last. |

The Word Within the Word • Notes #25

1. A **benefactor** is a person who does (fac) good (bene) to someone else. In Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*, the young Pip is assisted in life by an anonymous benefactor who—to Pip's initial horror—turns out to be an escaped convict Pip had helped when Pip was just a young lad.
2. A Micropoem: **Introspective** means inward-looking, but especially in a metaphorical sense. A person can be introspective in the sense of being mentally inward-looking—into himself.
3. **Dissonant** sounds are inharmonious because the sounds do not go together. Sounds which harmonize go together, whereas sounds which are dissonant clash, they are away (dis) from each other. If the brass section plays in the key of C, the woodwinds must not play in the key of D. (Not, at least, until they attempt Twentieth Century experimental compositions!) **Dissonance** is more of a clashing sound, whereas **cacophony** could refer to most any unpleasant noise.
4. In the madness (mania) called **megalomania**, the victim thinks of himself as larger (mega) than life—as more important than he really is. You sometimes hear the terms Napoleon-complex or Caesar-complex to refer to megalomania.
5. **Ten Pronunciation Tips**
vivacious - vie VAY shuss
surfeit - SURR fit
pellucid - pel LOOSE id
amour-propre - amoor PRO prah
exculpate - EX cull pate
megalomania - megalo MAY nee ah
heliotropic - helio TRO pic
cognoscenti - cog no SEN tee
euphemism - YOO fe mism
6. **Spanish Cognates:** One of the most important observations to gain from the study of the etymology of English vocabulary is that English and Spanish share thousands of words that are cognates, related words, that have common origins. Often, the English and the Spanish word share not only a stem, but even more than one stem, and often in the same order. As examples, here are some English words from this lesson, and their Spanish cognates:

introspective : introspectivo
intervene : intervenir
syndrome : síndrome
subordinate : subordinar
malevolence : malevolencia
dissonant : disonante

credible : creíble
euphemism : eufemismo
benefactor : benefactor
magnate : magnate
octagenarian : octagenario
narcolepsy : narcolepsia

The Word Within the Word • Classic Words #25

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 Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*

[The] girl had made _____ fun at his martial spirit.

- a. belligerent
- b. vivacious**
- c. introspective
- d. pellucid

2. From Jack London's *The Call of the Wild*

Joe was the very opposite, sour and _____.

- a. credible
- b. subordinate
- c. vivacious
- d. introspective**

3. From Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*

Six days _____ between me and the date of departure.

- a. surfeited
- b. circumvented
- c. intervened**
- d. exculpated

4. From Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of Seven Gables*

The Puritan _____ bade all the town to be his guests.

- a. magnate**
- b. benefactor
- c. octagenarian
- d. belligerent

5. From John Hersey's *Hiroshima*

[There was] a curious _____ of symptoms that cropped out in the third and fourth weeks.

- a. hemiplegia
- b. narcolepsy
- c. syndrome**
- d. surfeit

The Word Within the Word • Mystery Spelling #25

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| introspective | intro spect ive |
| intervene | inter vene |
| syndrome | syn drome |
| subordinate | sub ord in ate |
| dissonant | dis son ant |
| belligerent | bell igerent |
| credible | cred ible |
| impending | im pend ing |
| polyphonic | poly phon ic |
| exculpate | ex culp ate |
| euphemism | eu phem ism |
| benefactor | bene fact or |
| megalomania | mega lo mania |
| magnate | magn ate |
| vivacious | viv aci ous |
| heliotropic | helio trop ic |
| amour-propre | amour propre |
| octagenarian | octa gen arian |
| cognoscenti | cogn o scent i |
| surfeit | sur feit |
| primate | prim ate |
| pellucid | pel luc id |
| circumvent | circum vent |
| hemiplegia | hemi plegia |
| narcolepsy | narco lepsy |

SYNTHESIS:

What category could include the words **introspective**, **megalomania**, **vivacious**, and **cognoscenti**?

DIVERGENCE:

What consumer items of different kinds are preferred by the **cognoscenti**?

ANALYSIS:

Break down and explain the following words: **circumvent**, **exculpate**, and **heliotropic**.

EVALUATION:

Should a criminal be **exculpated** if the methods used by the police to catch the criminal are themselves illegal and unconstitutional?

INTUITION:

When you are an **octagenarian**, what will your hobby be?

EMOTION:

What are the emotions that you associate with a **vivacious** personality?

AESTHETICS:

Can you imagine making sculpture out of **pellucid** substances like plexiglass? How would you use plexiglass to make sculpture?