



Pronouns with *The Word Within the Word* • List #2

In the sentences below, the words in **bold** contain important Latin or Greek stems, and the words in *italics* are pronouns. For each italicized word, write the type of pronoun it is: subject, object, possessive, interrogative, demonstrative, indefinite, relative, reflexive, or intensive.

1. *It* is, or once was, ruled by a **monarchy**. _____
2. The **dullard** was always boring *everyone* to tears. _____
3. In killing *his*, Oedipus was guilty of **patricide**. _____
4. *She* is an electronic **technician**. _____
5. It was **dermatitis**, and *ours* was painful and unpleasant. _____
6. Balthazar, the scuba diver, collects *them*—**aquatic** species. _____
7. *Hers* was a damaged **auditory** nerve. _____
8. *Theirs* was a case of extreme **belligerence**. _____
9. The hostile island tribe **captured** *them*. _____
10. *He* **incised** the design into the oak door with a knife. _____
11. **Biomorphic** abstract sculpture resembles *these*. _____
12. *His* was a tedious **autobiography**. _____
13. The **porter** will carry *yours* to the train. _____
14. Please **inscribe** *mine*, too. _____
15. Since Ishmael loved insects, *he* studied **entomology**. _____
16. The grand jury returned a robbery **indictment** against *him*. _____
17. A **credulous** person will believe *that*. _____
18. Unfortunately, the **centipede** ate *theirs*. _____
19. Ishmael was a **neophyte** in whaling, but *he* learned quickly. _____
20. *He*, Ahab, was a lifelong **bibliophile**. _____

credulous



Adjectives *modify* nouns or pronouns.

Adjective (adj.): An adjective is a word that **modifies** a noun or a pronoun: the *starry* night, the *verdant* hillside, the *very* edge, she was *brilliant*. Why would we want to modify a noun or pronoun? Great writers warn us that the overuse of adjectives or adverbs can make sentences wordy and tedious. So instead of modifying nouns with adjectives, why not just use better nouns? Would it not be better to use nouns all the time and eliminate adjectives? Well, even if that were desirable, it would be impossible because we have only thousands of nouns, but there are billions of things in the universe. We need adjectives to describe things for which no precise nouns exist and to describe all of the things for which we do not have an exact noun. Adjectives also help us to express subtle differences between similar things. We say that adjectives modify nouns or pronouns, but notice that in most cases the pronoun means the noun, so even then the adjective really is modifying the noun.

Modify is more precise than describe. Sometimes we hear that adjectives *describe* nouns, but that is not an accurate expression. We can describe something without changing it. We should use the word *modify*. To modify is to change. How do adjectives modify nouns? Imagine a *small* boat. Think about the *small* boat until you can picture it in your mind. Now, imagine a *gravy* boat. It is something different entirely. The adjective changes the noun in the mind.

Adjectives ~~describe~~ **modify**
the nouns of the mind.