



pernicious

Category : Adjectives

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Pernicious things (and people) are evil, deadly, or destructive, often in a way that's sneaky or gradual.

Pronunciation:
per NISH us

Part of speech:
Adjective.

(Adjectives are describing words, like "large" or "late.")

They can be used in two ways:

1. Right before a noun, as in "a pernicious thing" or "a pernicious person."
2. After a linking verb, as in "It was pernicious" or "He was pernicious."

Other forms:

Perniciously & perniciousness.

(Although there's a nicer-sounding noun, "perniciousness," no one uses it now.)

How to use it:

This word is formal and very negative.

Talk about pernicious diseases and insects;
pernicious problems and issues;
pernicious threats and weaknesses;
pernicious crimes, actions, practices, and campaigns;
pernicious intents and purposes;
pernicious ideas, doctrines, principles, and ideologies;
pernicious superstitions and conspiracy theories;
pernicious apathy and ignorance;
pernicious influences and effects;
pernicious cycles of events, and so on.

One thing can be pernicious to another: "a disease pernicious to these plants," "a shyness pernicious to his social life."

It's much less common, but you can also say that people are pernicious.



examples:

Flint's water crisis worsened in the face of pernicious neglect.

A promise to love, honor, and obey? Plenty of us omitted that pernicious "obey" from our wedding vows.