

Word of the Day – **Pendulum**

Transcript

Hi everyone! Today's word of the day is **pendulum**. It is a noun with two meanings. A tangible **pendulum**, something that you and I can see and feel, is a weight at the bottom of a metal stick that swings from side to side. The other definition of **pendulum** is any thought, idea or belief that often tends to change to the opposite. It is often used in writing and formal speeches rather than in day to day conversations.

First, let's consider a physical **pendulum**. If you've ever seen a grandfather clock, such as the big clock in the Nutcracker ballet, you may have noticed the large metal stick below the clock face that constantly moves from side to side. This is the most common place you'll see a **pendulum**. Every time the **pendulum** swings, the clock hands move a pre-determined amount – in most cases, one second. **Pendulums** can be explained by mathematical equations and the earth's rotation and field of gravity... but let's move on.

In theory, a **pendulum** can also be used as a gauge by placing any two opposite thoughts on the opposite arcs. It is most often used to describe politics. For example, the President's approval rating can be described as a **pendulum** – one side can represent a high approval rating, while the other is representative of a low rating. It is influenced by his most recent actions – perhaps vetoing a highly-supported bill may cause his rating **pendulum** to swing to a lower number but taking a tour of a hurricane-torn area will endear him to citizens, swinging his **pendulum** up to a higher rating.

For example, the Associated Press recently stated the following regarding the upcoming November U.S. presidential elections:

“The improving economy is swinging the pendulum in President Barack Obama's favor in the 14 states where the presidential election will likely be decided.”

In this phrase, the economy is the power behind the **pendulum** but it might not continue to improve, so it implies that could be easily changed. The two sides could simply be labeled, “victory” or “loss” of the November 2012 election for President Obama. If you would like more information, or the full transcript, please visit our website. Thank you very much and have a great day.