Quick Word Challenge
Question: 1 - Score: 0 / 5
fantastic atmosphere or poisonous atmosphere?
Drag the correct answer into the box.
poisonous atmosphere
fantastic atmosphere
With more seats made available, it should be a ______.
NEXT

Definition of 'devil'

devil

Collins COBUILD

Word Frequency

(devᵊl)

Word forms: plural **devils**

1. PROPER NOUN

In Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, **the Devil** is the most powerful evil spirit.

2. COUNTABLE NOUN

A **devil** is an evil spirit.

...the idea of angels with wings and devils with horns and hoofs.

Synonyms: evil spirit, demon, fiend, ghoul More Synonyms of **devil**

3. COUNTABLE NOUN

You can use **devil** to emphasize the way you feel about someone. For example, if you call someone a poor **devil**, you are saying that you feel sorry for them. You can call someone you are fond of but who sometimes annoys or irritates you an old **devil** or a little **devil**.

[informal, feelings]

I felt sorry for Blake, poor devil.

Manfred, you're a suspicious old devil.

Susie, you're a determined little devil.

Synonyms: person, individual, soul, creature More Synonyms of **devil**

4. COUNTABLE NOUN

If you refer to someone as a **devil**, you mean that they do not behave very well but you like them and are not angry with them.

[informal]

'I think he was a bit of a devil,' Constance said.

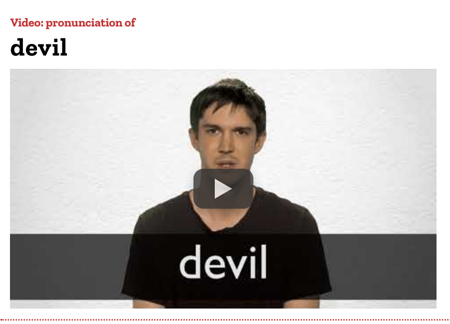
5. See a devil of a
6. See better the devil you know
7. See have the devil's own job/a devil of a job
8. See like the devil
9. See the devil take the hindmost
10. See between the devil and the deep blue sea
11. See sell your soul to the devil
12. See talk/speak of the devil
13. See what/how/why the devil

More Synonyms of **devil**

COBUILD Advanced English Dictionary. Copyright © HarperCollins Publishers

Video: pronunciation of

devil



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devil

in British English

(ˈdevᵊl)

NOUN

1. *theology* (*often capital*)
the chief spirit of evil and enemy of God, often represented as the ruler of hell and often depicted as a human figure with horns, cloven hoofs, and tail
2. *theology*
one of the subordinate evil spirits of traditional Jewish and Christian belief
3. a person or animal regarded as cruel, wicked, or ill-natured
4. a person or animal regarded as unfortunate or wretched
that poor devil was ill for months
5. a person or animal regarded as clever, daring, mischievous, or energetic
6. *informal*
something difficult or annoying
7. *Christian Science*
the opposite of truth; an error, lie, or false belief in sin, sickness, and death
8. (in Malaysia) a ghost
9. a portable furnace or brazier, esp one used in road-making or one used by plumbers Compare salamander (sense 7)
10. any of various mechanical devices, usually with teeth, such as a machine for making wooden screws or a rag-tearing machine
11. See printer's devil
12. *law*
(in England) a junior barrister who does work for another in order to gain experience, usually for a half fee
13. *meteorology*
a small whirlwind in arid areas that raises dust or sand in a column
14. See between the devil and the deep blue sea
15. See devil of
16. See give the devil his due
17. See go to the devil
18. See like the devil
19. See play the devil with
20. See raise the devil
21. See talk of the devil!
22. See the devil!
23. See the devil's own
24. See the devil take the hindmost
25. See the devil to pay
26. See the very devil

VERB

Word forms: -vils, -villing, -villed

Word forms: US **-vils, -viling** *or* **-viled**

27. (*transitive*)
to prepare (esp meat, poultry, or fish) by coating with a highly flavoured spiced paste or mixture of condiments before cooking
28. (*transitive*)
to tear (rags) with a devil
29. (*intransitive*)
to serve as a printer's devil
30. (*intransitive*) *mainly British*
to do hackwork, esp for a lawyer or author; perform arduous tasks, often without pay or recognition of one's services
31. (*transitive*) *US informal*
to harass, vex, torment, etc

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Word origin

Old English *dēofol*, from Latin *diabolus*, from Greek *diabolos* enemy, accuser, slanderer, from *diaballein*, literally: to throw across, hence, to slander

devil

in American English

Word Frequency

(ˈdevəl)

NOUN

1. *Theology*
a. [*often D-*]
the chief evil spirit, a supernatural being subordinate to, and the foe of, God, and the tempter of human beings; Satan: typically depicted as a man with horns, a tail, and cloven feet
, *with the*
b. any evil spirit; demon
2. a very wicked or malevolent person
3. a person who is mischievous, energetic, reckless, etc.
4. an unlucky, unhappy person
that poor devil
5. anything that is difficult or is hard to operate, control, understand, etc.
6. printer's devil
7. any of various machines for tearing things, as paper or rags, to bits

VERB TRANSITIVE

Word forms: ˈ**deviled** *or* ˈ**devilled**, ˈ**deviling** *or* ˈ**devilling**

8. to prepare (food, often chopped food) with hot seasoning
deviled ham
9. to tear up (rags, etc.) with a special machine
10. *US*
to annoy; torment; tease

Idioms:

a devil of a
between the devil and the deep (blue) sea
give the devil his due
go to the devil
play the devil with
raise the devil
the devil!
the devil to pay

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Word origin

ME *devel* < OE *deofol* < LL(Ec) *diabolus* < Gr *diabolos*, slanderous (in LXX, Satan; in N.T., devil) < *diaballein*, to slander, lit., throw across < *dia-*, across + *ballein*, to throw: see ball[2]; (sense 8) from the notion of heat

devil

in American English

Word Frequency

(ˈdevəl) (verb **-iled**, **-iling** *or esp Brit* **-illed**, **-illing**)

NOUN

1. *Theology*
a. (*sometimes cap*)
the supreme spirit of evil; Satan
b. a subordinate evil spirit at enmity with God, and having power to afflict humans both with bodily disease and with spiritual corruption
2. an atrociously wicked, cruel, or ill-tempered person
3. a person who is very clever, energetic, reckless, or mischievous
4. a person, usually one in unfortunate or pitiable circumstances
The poor devil kept losing jobs through no fault of his own
5. *Also called:* printer's devil *Printing*
a young worker below the level of apprentice in a printing office
6. any of various mechanical devices, as a machine for tearing rags, a machine for manufacturing wooden screws, etc.
7. *Nautical* (*in deck or hull planking*)
any of various seams difficult to caulk because of form or position
8. any of various portable furnaces or braziers used in construction and foundry work
9. See between the devil and the deep blue sea
10. See devil of a
11. See give the devil his due
12. See go to the devil
13. See let the devil take the hindmost
14. See play the devil with
15. See raise the devil
16. See the devil
17. See the devil to pay

TRANSITIVE VERB

18. to annoy; harass; pester
to devil Mom and Dad for a new car
19. to tear (rags, cloth, etc.) with a devil
20. *Cookery*
to prepare (food, usually minced) with hot or savory seasoning
to devil eggs

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Word origin

[bef. 900; ME *devel*, OE *dēofol* ‹ LL *diabolus* ‹ Gk *diábolos* Satan (Septuagint, NT), lit., slanderer (n.), slanderous (adj.), verbal of *diabállein* to assault someone's character, lit., to throw across, equiv. to *dia-* DIA- + *bállein* to throw]

Quotations

If the devil doesn't exist, but man has created him, he has created him in his own image and likeness
FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY *The Brothers Karamazov*

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!
BIBLE: *Isaiah*

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour
BIBLE: *I Peter*

The serpent subtlest beast of all the field,
Of huge extent sometimes, with brazen eyes
And hairy mane terrific
JOHN MILTON *Paradise Lost*

The devil's most devilish when respectable
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING *Aurora Leigh*

An apology for the Devil; It must be remembered that we have only heard one side of the case. God has written all the books
SAMUEL BUTLER

Better the devil you know than the devil you don't know

The devil looks after his own

He who sups with the devil should have a long spoon

Talk of the devil, and he shall appear

More idioms containing

devil

speak of the devil
have a devil of a job
better the devil you know
be between the devil and the deep blue sea

Examples of 'devil' in a sentence

devil

Example sentences from Collins dictionaries

it makes a devil of a row

how/what/why/who the devil ...?

I feel sorry for the poor devil who has to work with you.

He sees the devil as a little imp with horns.

go on, be a devil!

That crafty old devil had taken us all for a ride.

go to the devil!

the devil take it!

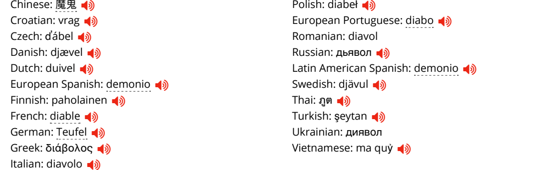
he signed away his soul to the devil

the devil it is!

Trends of

devil

View usage for: All Years



In other languages

devil

British English: devil /ˈdɛvl/ noun
In Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, *the Devil* is the most powerful evil spirit.

American English: devil /ˈdɛvəl/
Arabic: شَيْطَان
Brazilian Portuguese: diabo
Chinese: 魔鬼
Croatian: vrag
Czech: ďábel
Danish: djævel
Dutch: duivel
European Spanish: demonio
Finnish: paholainen
French: diable
German: Teufel
Greek: διάβολος
Italian: diavolo
Japanese: 悪魔
Korean: 악마
Norwegian: djevel
Polish: diabeł
European Portuguese: diabo
Romanian: diavol
Russian: дьявол
Latin American Spanish: demonio
Swedish: djävul
Thai: ภูต
Turkish: şeytan
Ukrainian: диявол
Vietnamese: ma quỷ

Translate your text for free

Browse alphabetically

devil

device maker
device manufacturer
deviceful
devil
devil of
devil of a

All ENGLISH words that begin with 'D'

Related terms of

devil

devil dog
devil of
devil ray
go-devil
sea devil

View more related words

Source

Definition of **devil** from the Collins English Dictionary
Read about the team of authors behind Collins Dictionaries.

• New from Collins •

Quick Word Challenge
Question: 1 - Score: 0 / 5
cookie or cake?
Which version is correct?
that's the way the cookie crumbles
that's the way the cake crumbles
NEXT

Dec 30, 2021
Word of the day
Old Father Time
time personified
SEE FULL DEFINITION
SEE PREVIOUS WORDS

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