

Definition of devil noun from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary

devil noun



/ˈdevl/

/ˈdevl/

Idioms

1 the Devil (in the Christian, Jewish and Muslim religions) the most powerful evil being

SYNONYM Satan

- belief in the Devil
His strong left-wing views make him the devil incarnate to more extreme Conservatives.

TOPICS Religion and festivals C1

+ Oxford Collocations Dictionary

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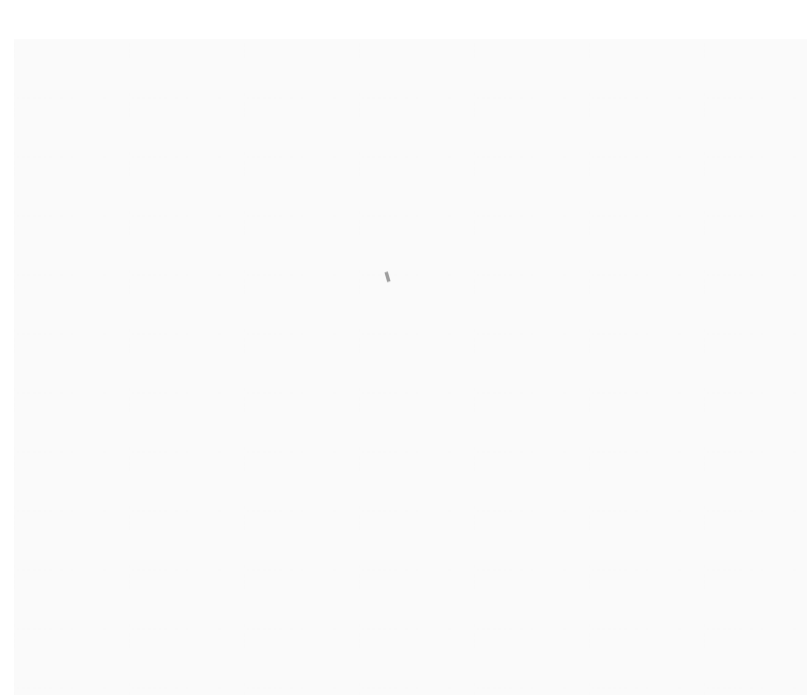
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2 an evil spirit

- They believed she was possessed by devils.
He behaved like someone possessed by devils.

TOPICS Religion and festivals C1

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3 (informal) a person who behaves badly, especially a child

- a naughty little devil

SEE ALSO she-devil

4 (old-fashioned, informal) used to talk about somebody and to emphasize an opinion that you have of them

- I miss the old devil, now that he's gone.
She's off to Greece for a month—lucky devil!
James was a handsome devil and rich, too.
They were handsome young devils in their uniforms, weren't they?

SEE ALSO dust devil

+ Word Origin

Idioms

be a devil

(British English) people say Be a devil! to encourage somebody to do something that they are not sure about doing

- Go on, be a devil, buy both of them.

better the devil you know (than the devil you don't)

(saying) used to say that it is easier and wiser to stay in a bad situation that you know and can deal with rather than change to a new situation that may be much worse

between the devil and the deep blue sea

in a difficult situation where there are two equally unpleasant or unacceptable choices

TOPICS Preferences and decisions C2

the devil

(old-fashioned) very difficult or unpleasant
These berries are the devil to pick because they're so small.

the devil looks after his own

(saying) bad people often seem to have good luck

the devil makes work for idle hands

(saying) people who do not have enough to do often start to do wrong
She blamed the crimes on the local jobless teenagers. 'The devil makes work for idle hands,' she would say.

a devil of a job/time

(old-fashioned) a very difficult or unpleasant job or time
I've had a devil of a job finding you.

the devil/hell to pay

(informal) a lot of trouble
There'll be hell to pay when he finds out.

go to the devil!

(old-fashioned, informal) used, in an unfriendly way, to tell somebody to go away

like the devil

(old-fashioned, informal) very hard, fast, etc.
We ran like the devil.

sell your soul (to the devil)

to do anything, even something really bad or dishonest, in return for money, success or power

TOPICS Success C2

speak/talk of the devil

(informal) people say speak/talk of the devil when somebody they have been talking about appears unexpectedly

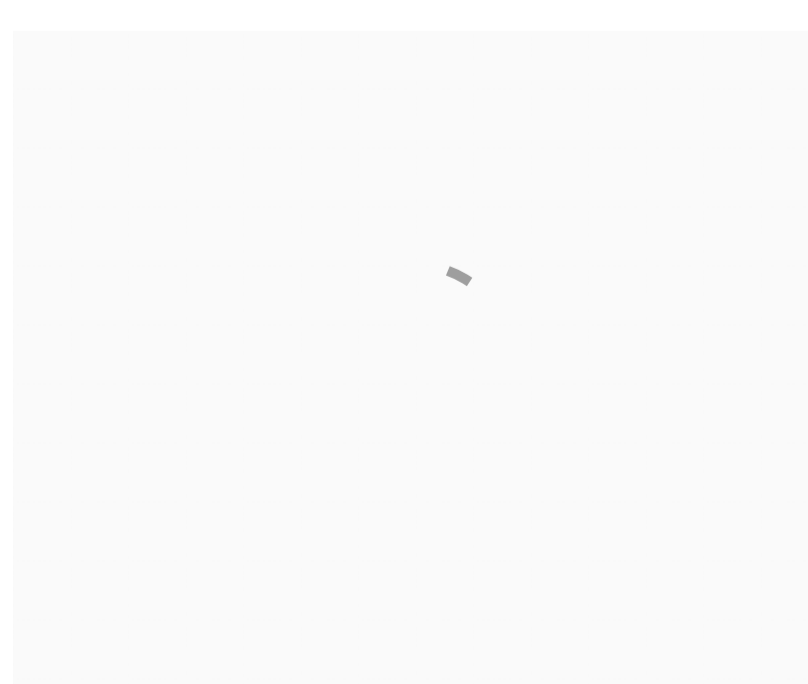
- Well, speak of the devil—here's Alice now!

what, where, who, why, etc. the devil...

(old-fashioned) used in questions to show that you are annoyed or surprised
What the devil do you think you're doing?

See devil in the Oxford Advanced American Dictionary

Check pronunciation: devil



Other results

All matches

- she-devil noun
dust devil noun
devil-may-care adjective
devil's food cake noun
devil's food cakes
talk/speak of the devil
needs must (when the Devil drives)
between the devil and the deep blue sea

+ Idioms

Nearby words

- deviation noun
device noun
devil noun
devilish adjective
devilishly adverb

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mystery noun
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