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sud·den  (sŭd n)

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adj.

1. Happening without warning; unforeseen: *a sudden storm*.
2. Happening or done without delay; hasty or immediate: *a sudden decision*.
3. Characterized by sharp change in elevation; precipitous: *a sudden drop in the ocean floor*.

Idiom:

all of a sudden

Very quickly and unexpectedly; suddenly.

[Middle English *sodain*, from Old French, from Vulgar Latin **subitānus*, from Latin *subitāneus*, from *subitus*, from past participle of *subīre*, to approach stealthily : *sub-*, secretly; see [SUB-](#) + *īre*, to go; see **ei-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

sud den·ly *adv.*

sud den·ness *n.*

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The Indo-European appendix covers nearly half of the Indo-European roots that have left their mark on English words. A more complete treatment of Indo-European roots and the English words derived from them is available in our [Dictionary of Indo-European Roots](#).

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