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Language



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chis·el  (chĭz əl)

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n.

A metal tool with a sharp beveled edge, used to cut and shape stone, wood, or metal.

v. **chis·eled**, **chis·el·ing**, **chis·els** or **chis·elled** or **chis·el·ling**

v.tr.

1. To shape or cut with a chisel.

2. *Informal*

a. To cheat or swindle.

b. To obtain by deception.

v.intr.

1. To use a chisel.

2. *Informal*

a. To use unethical methods; cheat: *"who's up, who's down and who's chiseling on the side"* (James Reston).

b. To intrude oneself without welcome: *always tries to chisel in on our conversations.*

[Middle English, from Old French *cisiel*, from Vulgar Latin **cīsellus*, cutting tool, from diminutive of Latin *caesus*, past participle of *caedere*, to cut; see **kaə-id-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

chis el·er *n.*



(click for a larger image)

chisel

left: cold metal chisel with a flat head

top to bottom: cape, round-nose, and diamond-point metal chisel heads

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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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