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hol·low  (hŏl ō)

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adj. **hol·low·er, hol·low·est**

1. Having a cavity, gap, or space within: *a hollow wall*.
2. Deeply indented or concave; sunken: "*His bearded face already has a set, hollow look*" (Conor Cruise O'Brien).
3. Without substance or character: *a hollow person*. See Synonyms at [vain](#).
4. Devoid of truth or validity; specious: "*Theirs is at best a hollow form of flattery*" (Annalyn Swan).
5. Having a reverberating, sepulchral sound: *hollow footsteps*.

n.

1. A cavity, gap, or space: *a hollow behind a wall*.
2. An indented or concave surface or area.
3. A void; an emptiness: *a hollow in one's life*.
4. A small valley between hills or mountains.

v. **hol·lowed, hol·low·ing, hol·lows**

v.tr.

1. To make hollow: *hollow out a pumpkin*.
2. To scoop or form by making concave: *hollow out a nest in the sand*.

v.intr.

To become hollow or empty.

[Middle English *holwe, holowe*, from *holgh*, hole, burrow (influenced by *hole*, hollow), from Old English *holh*; see [kel-¹](#) [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

hol low·ly *adv.*

hol low·ness *n.*

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Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[Indo-European Roots](#)

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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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