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dictionary

of the
English
Language



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[guide to the dictionary](#)



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Cra·ter  (krā tər)

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n.

A constellation in the Southern Hemisphere near Hydra and Corvus.

[Latin *crātēr*, mixing bowl, crater; see [CRATER](#).]

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cra·ter  (krā tər)

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n.

1. A bowl-shaped depression created by the activity of a volcano or geyser.

2.

a. A bowl-shaped depression in a surface made by an explosion or the impact of a body, such as a meteoroid.

b. A pit; a hollow.

3. Variant of [krater](#).

v. **cra·tered**, **cra·ter·ing**, **cra·ters**

v.tr.

To make craters in: "*The missiles did not ... crater the airfield*" (Tom Clancy).

v.intr.

1. To form a crater or craters.

2. *Slang*

a. To fall and crash violently from a great height.

b. To fail utterly: "*talked about how tough times were in Texas since the oil business cratered*" (Stephen Coonts).

[Latin *crātēr*, from Greek *krātēr*, mixing vessel; see **kera-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]



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crater

top: Ol Doinyo Lengai, an active volcano in northern Tanzania (background) with a crater (foreground) formed by the collapse of a cone on its flank

bottom: Meteor Crater, near Winslow, Arizona



(click for a larger image)

crater

Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

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](#)

[Semitic Roots](#)

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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