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cru·el  (kr əl)

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adj. **cru·el·er**, **cru·el·est** or **cru·el·ler** or **cru·el·lest**

1. Disposed to inflict pain or suffering: *a cruel tyrant*.
2. Causing or characterized by severe pain, suffering, or distress: *cruel treatment; a cruel remark*.

[Middle English, from Old French, from Latin *crūdēlis*; see **kreuə-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

cru el·ly *adv.*

cru el·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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