


English [edit]

Etymology [edit]

From Middle English *sleēn*, *slayn*, from Old English *sleān* ("to strike, beat, smite, stamp, forge, sting, slay, kill, impact"), from Proto-Germanic **slahanaŋ* ("to fight, strike, kill"), from Proto-Indo-European **slek-* ("to hit, strike, throw"). Cognate with Dutch *slaan* ("to beat, hit, strike"), Low German *slaan* ("hit, strike"), German *schlagen* ("to beat, hit, strike"), Danish, Norwegian and Swedish *slå* ("to knock, beat, strike"), Icelandic *slá* ("to strike"). Related to slaughter, onslaught.

Pronunciation [edit]

- enPR: slā, IPA (key): /sleɪ/
- Audio (US)  0:00 MENU
- Rhymes: **-eɪ**
- Homophones: sleigh, sley

Verb [edit]

slay (*third-person singular simple present slays, present participle slaying, simple past slew or slayed, past participle slain or slayed*)

- (*now literary*) To kill, murder. [quotations ▼]
*The knight **slew** the dragon.*
*Our foes **must all be slain**.*
- (*literary*) To eradicate or stamp out.
*You **must slay** these thoughts.*
- (*by extension, colloquia*) To defeat, overcome (in a competition or contest). [quotations ▼]
- (*slang*) To delight or overwhelm, especially with laughter.
*Ha ha! You **slay** me!*
- (*slang, transitive, intransitive*) To amaze, stun or otherwise incapacitate by awesomeness; to be awesome at something; to kill (*slang sense*).
- (*slang*) To have sex with [quotations ▼]

Usage notes [edit]

- The alternative past tense and past participle form "slayed" is most strongly associated with the slang sense, "to delight or overwhelm":

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