

# Cleave

---

## A WORD WHICH IS ITS OWN ANTONYM

---

Main Entry: 1 **CLEAVE** Pronunciation Guide

Pronunciation: klv

Function: intransitive verb

Inflected Form(s): cleaved \-vd\; also clave \klv\; or clove \klv\; cleaved;  
cleaving; cleaves

Etymology: Middle English clevien, clivien, from Old English clifian, cleofian; akin to Old High German klebn to stick, Old Norse klfa to clamber, **cling to**, Greek glyphein **to carve or hollow out**, Serbian glîb filth, Old English cl[AE]g clay — more at CLAY

1 : **to adhere firmly and closely as though evenly and securely glued** <the rain continued ... **their uniforms cleaved uncomfortably to their bodies** — Norman Mailer> <**the homespun shirt...was sodden and clove coldly to her shivering body** — Florette Henri>

2 : **to divide into two parts by a cutting blow** : SPLIT <**the final blow cleaving the archbishop's skull** — E.V.Lucas> : **pass swiftly through (as water or air) as if by cutting** <**our bow...cleaving...the surface of the deep blue water** — Ernest Beaglehole> b : **to divide into distinct parts or portions especially into groups having divergent or opposing views or interests** c : to cause to undergo cleavage