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incel



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Est. 1828



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# incel

## noun

in·cel ['in-, sel](#) 

plural incels

: a person (usually a man) who regards himself or herself as being involuntarily [celibate](#) and typically expresses extreme resentment and hostility toward those who are sexually active

The term "incels" emerged from a Reddit group in which tens of thousands of users, most of them young men, commiserate about their lack of sexual activity—many of them placing the blame on women.—Josh O'Kane In recent years, a number of these men have identified as so-called incels, short for involuntary celibates, an online subculture of men who express rage at women for denying them sex and who frequently fantasize about violence and celebrate mass shooters in their online discussion groups.—Julie Bosman et. al

## Example Sentences

Recent Examples on the Web The reveal is this: Everyone in Victory is living in a simulation designed by Frank, who in our real (present-day) world is an *incel*-like cult leader who has brainwashed men to pay him to live in a virtual-reality simulation of the 1950s. —Roxana Hadadi, *Vulture*, 7 Nov. 2022 Jack is seen spending his days listening to online videos from an *incel*-like internet personality named Frank (Chris Pine), who has created an advanced technology that allows men and women to live inside a simulation of a 1950s utopian community. —Zack Sharf, *Variety*, 24 Sep. 2022 The Forever Alone Women subreddit welcomes them, but forbids the use of any *incel* or femcel lingo. —Kaitlyn Tiffany, *The Atlantic*, 12 May 2022 [See More](#)

These examples are programmatically compiled from various online sources to illustrate current usage of the word 'incel.' Any opinions expressed in the examples do not represent those of Merriam-Webster or its editors. [Send us feedback](#) about these examples.

## Word History

Etymology

*in*voluntary *cel*ibate

Note: The word *incel* apparently first appeared on a Usenet newsgroup in the late 1990's. See the article by Ben Zimmer, "How 'Incel' Got Hijacked," published online at *Politico Magazine*, May 8, 2018 (<https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/05/08/intel-involuntary-celibate-movement-218324/>).

First Known Use

1999, in the meaning defined [above](#)  
Time Traveler  
The first known use of *incel* was in 1999  
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incel

[in celebration of](#)

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## Cite this Entry

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Last Updated: 27 Mar 2023 - Updated example sentences

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seder 

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Love It or Hate It

- When asked about her blind date, Carol spoke for hours with *vitriol*.

You know what it looks like...  
but what is it called?

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Can you make 12 words with  
7 letters?

PLAY

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- Pulchritudinous and many more

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When each letter can be seen but  
not heard

- 

### 'Dunderhead' and Other 'Nicer' Ways to Say Stupid

As illustrated by some very smart  
pups

- 

### When Were Words First Used?

- Look up any year to find out

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## ASK THE EDITORS

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### Weird Plurals

One goose, two geese. One moose,  
two... moose. Wh...

- 

### Irregardless

It is in fact a real word (but that  
doesn't mean ...

- 

### Bring vs. Take

Both words imply motion, but the  
difference may b...

- 

### Defenestration

The fascinating story behind many  
people's favori...

- 

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A charming quiz about fortunate  
and unfortunate w...

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## Name That Thing

You know what it looks like... but  
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