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ear·ly  (ûr lē)

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adj. ear·li·er, ear·li·est

1. Of or occurring near the beginning of a given series, period of time, or course of events: *in the early morning; scored two runs in the early innings.*

2.

a. Of or belonging to a previous or remote period of time: *the early inhabitants of the British Isles.*

b. Of or belonging to an initial stage of development: *an early form of life; an early computer.*

3. Occurring, developing, or appearing before the expected or usual time: *an early spring; an early retirement.*

4. Maturing or developing relatively soon: *an early variety of tomato.*

5. Occurring in the near future: *hoped for an early end to the negotiations.*

adv. ear·lier, ear·liest

1.

a. Near the beginning of a given series, period of time, or course of events: *departed early in the day; scored important victories early in the campaign.*

b. At or near the beginning of the morning: *She never used to get up so early.*

2. At or during a remote or initial period: *decided very early to go into medicine.*

3. Before the expected or usual time: *arrived at the meeting a few minutes early.*

4. Soon in relation to others of its kind: *a rose that was cultivated to bloom early.*

Idiom:

early on

At an early stage or point: *Early on in the movie, the main character loses his job.*

[Middle English *erli*, from Old English *ǣrlīce* : *ǣr*, before; see **ayer-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#) + *-līce*,

adv. suff.; see [-ly](#)².]

ear li·ness *n.*

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Ear·ly  (ûr lē), **Jubal Anderson** 1816-1894.

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American Confederate general whose forces threatened Washington, DC (1864) but were ultimately defeated by Union troops led by Philip H. Sheridan (1865).

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

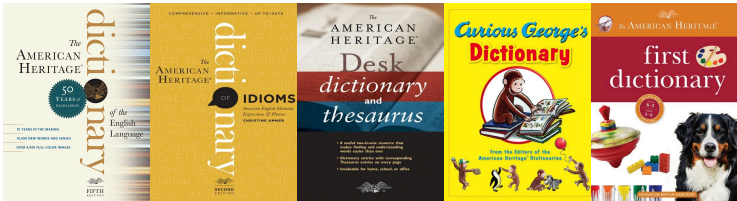
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

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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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