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dictionary

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rar·e·fy also **rar·i·fy**  (râr ə-fī')

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v. **rar·e·fied**, **rar·e·fy·ing**, **rar·e·fies** also **rar·i·fied** or **rar·i·fy·ing** or **rar·i·fies**

v.tr.

1. To make thin or less dense, as air.

2. To purify or refine: *"The [medieval] Italians ... rarefy the image of the lady, treating her as a quasi-celestial figure"* (Marcia L. Colish).

v.intr.

To become thin or less dense.

[Middle English *rarefien*, from Old French *rarefier*, from Medieval Latin *rārificāre*, alteration of Latin *rārēfacere* : *rārus*, rare + *facere*, to make; see **dhē-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

rar'e-fi a·ble *adj.*

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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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