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dead  (dĕd)

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adj. **dead·er, dead·est**

1. Having lost life; no longer alive.
2. Marked for certain death; doomed: *knew when he saw the soldiers that he was a dead man.*
3.
 - a. Having the physical appearance of death: *a dead pallor.*
 - b. Lacking feeling or sensitivity; numb or unresponsive: *Passersby were dead to our pleas for help.*
 - c. Weary and worn-out; exhausted.
4.
 - a. Not having the capacity to live; inanimate or inert.
 - b. Not having the capacity to produce or sustain life; barren: *dead soil.*
5.
 - a. No longer in existence, use, or operation: *a dead language.*
 - b. No longer having significance or relevance: *a dead issue.*
 - c. Physically inactive; dormant: *a dead volcano.*
6.
 - a. Not commercially productive; idle: *dead capital.*
 - b. Not circulating or running; stagnant: *dead water; dead air.*
7.
 - a. Devoid of human or vehicular activity; quiet: *a dead town.*
 - b. Lacking all animation, excitement, or activity; dull: *The party being dead, we left early.*
8. Having no resonance. Used of sounds.
9. Having grown cold; having been extinguished: *dead coals; a dead flame.*
10. Lacking elasticity or bounce: *That tennis ball is dead.*
11.
 - a. Not working because of a fault or breakdown: *The motor is dead. The phone is dead.*
 - b. Not connected to a source of electric current: *a dead wire.*
 - c. Drained of electric charge; discharged: *a dead battery.*
12.
 - a. Sudden; abrupt: *a dead stop.*
 - b. Complete; utter: *dead silence.*
 - c. Exact; unerring: *the dead center of a target.*
13. **Sports** Out of play. Used of a ball.

n.

1. (*used with a pl. verb*) People who have died: *respect for the dead.*
2. The period exhibiting the greatest degree of intensity: *the dead of winter; the dead of night.*

adv.

1. Absolutely; altogether: *You can be dead sure of my innocence.*
2. Directly; exactly: *There's a gas station dead ahead.*
3. Suddenly: *She stopped dead on the stairway.*

Idioms:

dead and buried

No longer in use or under consideration: *All past animosities are dead and buried now.*

dead in the water

Unable to function or move: *The crippled ship was dead in the water. With no leadership, the project was dead in the water.*

dead to rights

In the very act of making an error or committing a crime: *The police caught the thief dead to rights with my silverware.*

dead to the world

Soundly asleep.

over my dead body

Used to express dramatic refusal.

[Middle English *ded*, from Old English *dēad*; see **dheu-**² [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

dead **ness** *n.*

Synonyms: **dead, deceased, departed, late, extinct, lifeless**

These adjectives all mean without life. *Dead* applies in general to whatever once had—but no longer has—physical life (*a dead body; a dead leaf*), but is also applied to function (*a dead battery*) and force or currency (*a dead issue; a dead language*). *Deceased* and *departed* are polite or euphemistic terms referring only to people: *attended a memorial service for a recently deceased friend; looking at pictures of departed relatives*. *Late* is also restricted to people and usually implies recent death: *a gift in memory of her late husband*. *Extinct* can refer to what has no living successors (*extinct species such as the dodo*) or to what is extinguished or inactive (*an extinct volcano*). *Lifeless* applies to what no longer has physical life (*a lifeless body*), to what does not support life (*a lifeless planet*), or to what lacks animation, spirit, or brightness (*a lifeless performance; lifeless colors*).

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Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

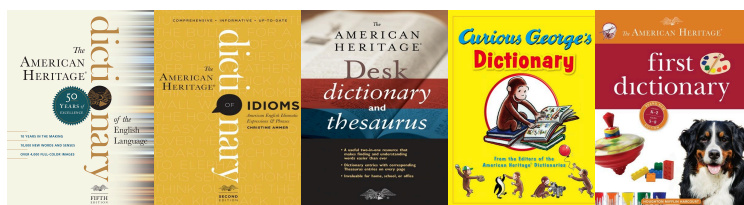
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

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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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