

## Latin Expressions Sometimes Encountered in English

These expressions are from many sources, some known, some not. They come from classical authors, medieval proverbs, legal Latin, terms of logic and scholastic disputation, the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church. Pronunciation varies: some are pronounced as if they were English, some as Classical Latin, some in the manner of Church Latin.

### — Abbreviations —

A.D., Anno Domini	op. cit., opus citatum
A.M., Ante Meridiem	P.M., Post Meridiem
D.V., Deo Volente	P.S., Post Scriptum
et al., et alia	pro and con, pro et contra
etc., et cetera	pro tem., pro tempore
e.g., exempli gratia	Q.E.D., Quod Erat Demonstrandum
ibid., ibidem	q.v., quod vide
i.e., id est	R.I.P., Requiescat In Pace
I.N.R.I., Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum	SPQR, Senatus Populusque Romanus
infra dig., infra dignitatem	verb. sat, verbum sat sapienti
nem. con., nemine contradicente	vs., versus
N.B., Nota Bene	

a fortiori, *from a stronger position, i.e., all the more so*  
 ab ovo, *from the egg, i.e., from the very beginning*  
 ad hoc, *for this (particular purpose)*  
 ad hominem, *for the man, i.e., by interest or prejudice rather than truth or logic*  
 ad infinitum, *to eternity, i.e., endlessly*  
 ad nauseam, *to nausea, i.e., to the point of being disgusting*  
 alias, *otherwise (named)*  
 alibi, *elsewhere, i.e., evidence of absence from a given place*  
 Alma Mater, *foster mother, nurse (used of a school or college)*  
 alumnus, *foster child, nurseling (used of a graduate of an Alma Mater)*  
 Anno Domini, *in the year of our Lord*  
 ante bellum, *before the war (used, in the South, especially of the War between the States)*

ante meridiem, *before noon*  
 argumentum ex silentio, *an argument based on silence, i.e., an attempt to prove something by the absence of evidence to the contrary*  
 Ars gratia artis, *Art for the sake of art (alone)*  
 Ars longa, vita brevis, *Art is long, life short.*  
 bona fide, *in good faith, i.e., real, without deceit*  
 Carpe diem, *Seize the day, i.e., live in the present.*  
 casus belli, *an occasion of war, i.e., an excuse for making war*  
 ceteris paribus, *all other things being equal*  
 Credo, *I believe (the opening of the Christian creed; used generally of any set of firm beliefs)*  
 Cui bono? *To whose advantage? (Lit., to whom for a good?)*  
 cum grano salis, *with a grain of salt, i.e., with some allowance*  
 cum laude, *with praise (of academic distinctions)*  
 data, *things given (as a basis for proof or investigation)*  
 de facto, *on the basis of fact, i.e., in reality*  
 De gustibus non est disputandum, *One ought not to argue about tastes.*  
 de jure, *on the basis of right, i.e., legally*  
 De minimis non curat lex, *The law does not care about the smallest things, i.e., The Law does not concern itself with trivial matters (a legal maxim).*  
 De mortuis nil nisi bonum, *(Say) nothing but good of the dead.*  
 de novo, *anew*  
 Deo volente, *God willing*  
 Dies Irae, *Day of wrath (Judgment Day) (the opening words of a hymn by Thomas of Celano)*  
 Dominus vobiscum, *The Lord be with you.*  
 Dramatis Personae, *masks of the drama, i.e., characters in the play*  
 E pluribus unum, *one from many (used, in an ancient poem, of the ingredients in a stew)*  
 Ecce homo, *Behold the man! (Pilate's words, presenting Jesus to the populace)*  
 emeritus, *discharged, i.e., retired*  
 et alia, *and other things*  
 et cetera, *and the rest*  
 ex cathedra, *from the chair, i.e., with authority*  
 Ex nihilo nihil fit, *Nothing is made from nothing.*  
 ex officio, *on the basis of his office, i.e., by virtue of his position*  
 ex post facto, *on the basis of something done afterwards, i.e., retroactive*  
 ex tempore, *out of the moment, i.e., on the spur of the moment, without preparation*  
 exeat, *let him go out (a permission to leave)*  
 exeunt, *they go out (a stage direction)*  
 exit, *he goes out (a stage direction)*  
 Festina lente, *Make haste slowly.*  
 fiat, *let it be done (a term for an absolute command)*  
 genius loci, *the spirit of the place*

Gloria in excelsis, *Glory in the highest (the opening words of the Greater Doxology)*  
 habeas corpus, *that you may have the body (a common-law writ requiring that a person be brought before a court without delay)*  
 ibidem, *in that same place (used to refer to a passage already cited)*  
 id est, *that is*  
 ignis fatuus, *foolish fire, i.e., the will-o'-the-wisp*  
 in esse, *in being, i.e., existing*  
 in extremis, *among the last things, i.e., at the point of death*  
 in flagrante delicto, *while the crime is blazing, i.e., (caught) in the act*  
 In hoc signo vinces, *In this sign you will conquer (the words heard by the Emperor Constantine when he saw the sign of the cross or the monogram of Christ).*  
 in loco parentis, *in the place of a parent*  
 in medias res, *into the midst of things, i.e., without preamble*  
 In Memoriam, *to the memory of*  
 in posse, *in possibility, i.e., potentially*  
 in propria persona, *in one's own character, i.e., without disguise*  
 in situ, *in place, i.e., in its original position*  
 in toto, *on the whole, i.e., generally or entirely*  
 in vacuo, *in emptiness, i.e., without considering other factors*  
 In vino veritas, *In wine there is truth.*  
 infra dignitatem, *beneath one's dignity*  
 inter alia, *among other things*  
 Ipse dixit, *He himself said so (used of an assertion supported only by someone's authority, without further proof).*  
 ipso facto, *by that very fact*  
 lapsus calami, *a slip of the pen*  
 lapsus linguae, *a slip of the tongue*  
 litteratim, *letter by letter, literally*  
 locum tenens, *one holding a place, i.e., a substitute*  
 magna cum laude, *with great praise (of academic distinctions)*  
 magnum opus, *a great work, i.e., a masterpiece*  
 materfamilias, *mother of the family, matriarch*  
 mea culpa, *by my fault*  
 Memento mori, *Remember to die, i.e., remember that you are mortal.*  
 Mens sana in corpore sano, *a sound mind in a sound body*  
 minutiae, *trifles, minor details*  
 mirabile dictu, *amazing to say*  
 modus operandi, *method of working*  
 Morituri te salutamus, *We, destined to die, salute you (said by gladiators to the sponsor of the games before the fighting began).*  
 multum in parvo, *much in little*  
 mutatis mutandis, *having changed the things which must be changed, i.e., after making all necessary changes or transpositions*  
 ne plus ultra, *no more beyond, i.e., the summit of achievement*

nemine contradicente, *no one contradicting, i.e., unanimous*  
 Nil desperandum, *Nothing is to be despaired of, i.e., one must never lose hope.*  
 nolens volens, *willy-nilly*  
 non compos mentis, *not sound of mind*  
 non sequitur, *it does not follow (used of an illogicality)*  
 nota bene, *note well*  
 Nunc dimittis, *Now lettest thou (thy servant) depart (in peace) (the opening words of the song of Simeon, used as a hymn).*  
 O tempora! O mores! *Oh, the times! Oh, the customs!*  
 obiter dictum, *said by the way, i.e., a parenthetical remark, (in law) an incidental opinion, not pertinent to the case at hand*  
 opus citatum, *the work previously cited*  
 pace, *by the leave of (used to express polite disagreement)*  
 pari passu, *at an equal pace, i.e., in an equal proportion*  
 paterfamilias, *father of the family, patriarch*  
 Paternoster, *Our Father (the opening words of the Lord's Prayer; used as a title for it)*  
 Pax vobiscum, *Peace be with you.*  
 peccavi, *I have sinned*  
 per annum, *by the year, annually*  
 per capita, *by heads, i.e., for each individual*  
 per diem, *by the day, each day*  
 per se, *in itself, intrinsically*  
 pons asinorum, *bridge of donkeys (a name for Euclid's fifth proposition, the diagram for which resembles a bridge, so called because some students could not pass it; used of a difficult stage in any study)*  
 Post hoc ergo propter hoc, *After this, therefore because of this, i.e., the false argument that any event which follows another must be a result of it.*  
 post meridiem, *after noon*  
 post mortem, *after death (used as a contraction of post mortem examination)*  
 post scriptum, *written afterwards*  
 prima facie, *by first appearance, i.e., obvious on the face of it*  
 pro bono publico, *for the people's good*  
 pro et contra, *for and against*  
 pro forma, *for form's sake, as a matter of form*  
 pro rata, *according to a fixed (share), i.e., in proportion*  
 pro tempore, *for the time being*  
 quasi, *as if, i.e., as it were; in a certain sense*  
 quid pro quo, *something for something, i.e., something in return, tit for tat*  
 Quod erat demonstrandum, *Which was to be demonstrated (used at the end of a logical proof)*  
 quod vide, *which see (used to refer to another entry or article in a dictionary or encyclopedia)*  
 rara avis, *a rare bird, i.e., an extraordinary person or thing*

*reductio ad absurdum*, *reduction to absurdity*, i.e., disproving a proposition by arguing from it to an impossible conclusion

*Requiescat in pace*, *May he rest in peace.*

*sanctum sanctorum*, *holy of holies* (used of any very private place)

*Senatus Populusque Romanus*, *the Senate and the Roman People* (summing up the sovereign power of Rome)

*seriatim*, *in series*

*Sic transit gloria mundi*, *Thus passes the glory of the world.*

*sine die*, *without a day* (appointed for reassembly)

*sine qua non*, *without which not*, i.e., an indispensable condition, a necessity

*status quo ante*, *the condition in which (matters were) before*

*sub rosa*, *under the rose*, i.e., secretly, privately (the rose being a symbol of secrecy)

*sui generis*, *of its own kind (and no other)*, i.e., unique

*summa cum laude*, *with highest praise* (of academic distinctions)

*summum bonum*, *the highest good* (a term in ethics)

*Sursum corda*, *(Lift) up your hearts* (the opening words of a versicle of Christian liturgy).

*tabula rasa*, *a smoothed tablet*, i.e., a blank page (used to refer to the mind before it has received sensory perceptions from the outside world)

*Te Deum*, *(We praise) Thee God* (the opening words of a famous Christian hymn).

*Tempus fugit*, *Time flies.*

*terra firma*, *solid earth*

*terra incognita*, *unknown land*, i.e., undiscovered territory

*ultima Thule*, *furthest Thule* (a remote northern land of legend); used of any very distant place

*Vade mecum*, *Go with me* (a name for a handbook to be carried at all times)

*verbatim*, *word by word*, i.e., in the same words

*Verbum sat sapienti*, *A word to the wise is sufficient.*

*versus*, *against*

*vice versa*, *the order having been changed*, i.e., conversely

*viva voce*, *by the living voice*, i.e., orally

*vivat*, *may he live*, i.e., long live . . .

*vox populi*, *the voice of the people*

