

Latin Words Commonly Used in English

NB: See *Longman*, page 474, for comments on italicizing foreign words

Latin	Meaning	Example or comment
ad hoc	formed or done for a particular purpose only	An ad hoc committee was set up to oversee the matter.
ad nauseam	repeating or continuing to the point of boredom	The apparent risks of secondary smoking have been debated ad nauseam.
ad infinitum	continuing into infinity	The politician ran on ad infinitum about his position on the matter.
bona fide	genuine; real	Only bona fide members of the club may use the clubhouse.
caveat emptor	let the buyer beware	The principle that the buyer is responsible for checking the quality and suitability of goods before a purchase is made.
circa; c.	around; approximately	The house was built circa 1870.
curriculum vitae	literally, course of life	a concise account of one's education, qualifications, and jobs previously held; a résumé (US)
de facto	in fact; in reality	Although the Emperor was the head of state, the de facto ruler of Japan was the Shogun.
ergo	therefore	The professor is ill; ergo, the class is cancelled.
erratum	error; mistake	Lists of errors from a previous publication are often marked "errata" (the plural, meaning errors).
in loco parentis	in the place of a parent	Teachers sometimes have to act in loco parentis.
in vitro	(in biology) taking place outside a living organism (for example in a test tube)	in vitro fertilization
non sequitur	literally, it does not follow	a statement (as a response) that does not follow logically from anything previously said
per	for each	This petrol station charges \$5.00 per gallon.
per annum.	for each year	The population is increasing by about 2% per annum.
per capita	for each person	The country's annual income is \$5000 per capita.
per se	in itself/themselves; intrinsically	These facts per se are not important.
post-mortem	examination of a body after death; autopsy	The post-mortem revealed that she had been murdered.

quid pro quo	favor or advantage given or expected in return for something	Similar to "tit for tat", "give and take" and "You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours."
re	about; concerning; regarding	I spoke to the manager re: your salary increase.
status quo	existing state of affairs	Monarchies wish to maintain the status quo.
terra firma	dry land; the ground as opposed to the air or sea	Shackleton and his men set foot on terra firma after three weeks at sea.
verbatim	in exactly the same words	I had to memorize the text verbatim.
versus; vs.; v.	against	What are the benefits of organic versus inorganic foods?
vice versa	the other way round	My telephone serves me, and not vice versa.
persona non grata	unacceptable or unwelcome person	From now on, you may consider yourself persona non grata in this house.

Some Latin Sayings and Quotations

Carpe diem! "Seize the day!" An exclamation urging someone to make the most of the present time and not worry about the future.

Cogito ergo sum. "I think, therefore I am." French philosopher Descartes' famous formula of 1641 attempting to prove his own existence.

in vino veritas "in wine, truth" (meaning that a drunk man reveals the truth about himself)

Tempus fugit. "Time flies."

Veni, vidi, vici. "I came, I saw, I conquered." The message sent by Julius Caesar to the Roman Senate after his battle in 47 BC against King Pharnaces II.

Common Latin Abbreviations

- A.D. (anno domini): in the year of the Lord
- A.M. (ante meridiem): before midday
- B.A. (Baccalaureus Artium): Bachelor of Arts
- B.Mus. (Baccalaureus Musicae): Bachelor of Music
- B.S., B.Sc. (Baccalaureus Scientiae): Bachelor of Science
- cf. (confer): compare
- D.D. (Divinitatis Doctor): Doctor of Divinity
- e.g. (exempli gratia): for example
- et al. (et alii, et alia): and others
- etc. (et cetera): and the rest, and so forth
- id. (idem): the same
- i.e. (id est): that is
- M.A. (Magister Artium): Master of Arts
- M.D. (Medicinae Doctor): Doctor of Medicine
- N.B. (Nota bene): Note well
- op. cit (opus citatum) work cited
- Ph.D. (Philosophiae Doctor): Doctor of Philosophy
- P.M. (post meridiem): after midday
- P.S. (post scriptum): written after
- R.I.P. (Requiescat in pace): Rest in peace