Common Latin Phrases and Abbreviations

A
ab aeterno - from the beginning of time
ab aequo placito - at one's pleasure
ab imo pectore - from the bottom of the heart
ab incunabulis - from the cradle
ab initio - from the beginning
ab intestato - having made no will
ab ovo - from the egg
absente reo - in absence of the defendant
absit invidia - no offence intended
ab urbe condita - from the foundation of the city (Rome)
a capite ad calcem - from head to heel
a contrario - from a contrary position
a cruce salus - from the cross comes salvation
acte est fabula - the play is finished
actus reus - guilty act
AD (Anno Domini) - in the year of the Lord
ad absurdum - to the point of absurdity
addendum - a thing to be added
ad hoc - to this particular purpose
ad hominem - according to the person
ad infinitum - to infinity
ad interim - for the meantime
ad lib (ad libitum) - as one pleases
ad locum - at the place
ad maiorem Dei gloriam - for the greater glory of God
ad nauseum - to the point of making one sick
ad rem - to the point
adsum - I am here
advocatus diaboli - the devil's advocate
aet. (aetatis) - age
a fortiori - by stronger reason
agenda - things to be done
Agnus Dei - the Lamb of God
AH (anno hegirae) - in the year of the hegira
alea iacta est - the die is cast
alias - otherwise
alibi - elsewhere
alma mater - nurturing mother
alter ego - other self / also known as
alumnus - nursing (former pupil)
am (ante meridiem) - before midday
a mensa et thoro - from board and bed (legal separation)
amicus curiae - friend of the court
amor patriae - love of country
an. (anno) - year
anno mundi - in the year of the world
anno regni - in the year of reign
annus horribilis - a horrible year
annus mirabilis - a wonderful year
ante - before
antebellum - before the war
antemortem - before death
a.p. (ante prandium) - before a meal
a posse ad esse - from possibility to actuality
a posteriori - from what comes later
a priori - from what comes before
aqua vitae - water of life (brandy)
arbiter elegantiae - judge in matters of taste
arcana imperii - secrets of the empire
ars gratia artis - art for art's sake
artium bacaleaureus - Bachelor of Arts (BA)
artium magister - Master of Arts (MA)
audaces fortuna iuvat - fortune favours the bold
aude sapere - dare to know
aurae mediocritas - the golden mean
aurora australis - the southern lights
aurora borealis - the northern lights
aut vincere aut mori - either conquer or die
ave atque vale - hello and goodbye
Ave Maria - Hail Mary
a verbi ad verbera - from words to blows
B
beatae memoriae - of blessed memory
Beata Virgo (Maria) - the Blessed Virgin (Mary)
bella gerant alii - let others wage war
bibere venenum in auro - drink poison from a cup of gold
b.i.d. (bis in die) - twice a day
bona fide - acting in good faith
C
c. (circa) - approximately
cadit quaestio - the question drops
cæcæ invidia est - envy is blind
carpe diem - seize the day
casus belli - an act used to justify war
cave - beware!
caveat - let him/her beware
caveat emptor - let the buyer beware
cave canem - beware of the dog
cedo maiori - I yield to a greater person
cetera desunt - the rest is missing
ceteris paribus - other things being equal
cf. (confer) - compare
Codex Juris Canonici - book of canon law
cogito ergo sum - I think therefore I am
commune bonum - the common good
compos mentis - of sound mind (and judgement)
concordia discors - discordant harmony
coniunctis viribus - with united powers
consensu omnium - by the agreement of all
consummatum est - it is completed
contra mundum - against the world
coram populo - before the public
Corpus Christi - the body of Christ
corpus delicti - the body of the crime
Corpus Juris Canonici - the body of canon law
Corpus Juris Civilis - the body of civil law
corpus vile - worthless body
corrigenda - things to be corrected
crescere et multiplicamini - increase and multiply
crinus falsi - perjury
crux - puzzle
cui bono - for whose advantage
culpa - a sin
cum - with
cum grano salis - with a grain of salt
cum laude - with praise
curriculum vitae - the course of one's life
custos morum - guardian of morals
data et accepta - expenditure and receipts
decri - i have decreed
de die in diem - from day to day
de facto - in fact
Dei gratia - by the grace of God
de integro - repeat again from the start
de iure - according to law
de novo - anew
de mortuis nil nisi bonum - speak no ill of the dead
Deo adiuvante - with God's help
Deo favente - with God's favour
Deo gratias - thanks be to God
Deo Optimo Maximo - to God, the Best, the Greatest
Deo volente - God willing
de profundis - up from the depths (of misery)
desunt cetera - the rest is missing
deus absconditus - a god who is hidden from man
deus ex machina - god from the machine
Deus vobiscum - God be with you
Deus vult - God wills it
diem perdist - I have lost a day
Dies Irae - Day of Wrath
dies non - business free day
dira necessitas - grim necessity
disjecta membra - the scattered remains
divide et impera - divide and rule
dixi - i have spoken
docendo discimus - by teaching, we learn
doli capax - capable of crime
Domine, dirige nos - Lord, direct us
Dominus illuminatio mea - the Lord is my light
Dominus vobiscum - the Lord be with you
(domus) dulcis domus - (home) sweet home
dramatis personae - characters of the play
dum spiro, spero - while I breathe, I hope
ecce homo - behold the man
ecce signum - behold the proof
e contrario - from a contrary position
editio princeps - first printed edition
e.g. (exempli gratia) - by grace of example
ego et rex meus - I and my King
eiusdem generis - of the same kind
emeritus - honourably discharged from service
eo ipso - by that very act
eo nomine - under that name
e pluribus unum - one out of many
e re nata - as circumstances dictate
E.R. (Elizabeth Regina/Eduardus Rex) - Queen Elizabeth/King Edward
ergo bibamus - therefore, let us drink
errare humanum est - to err is human
erratum (errata) - error (errors)
est deus in nobis - the is a god inside us
esto perpetue - may you last for ever
et al. (et aliis/et aliai/et alien) - and others
etc. (et ceterae/et cetera) - and the rest
et seq. (et sequens) - and the following
et seqq. (et sequentia) - and those that follow
et sic de ceteris - and so to of the rest
et tu, Brute - and you, Brutus
e vestigio - from where one stands
ex - out of
ex cathedra - with authority
excelsior - higher
exceptio probat regulam - the exception proves the rule
exceptis excipiendis - excepting what is to be excepted
exeat - let him/her go out
exequent - they go out
exequent omnes - all go out
ex gratia - done as a favour
ex hypothesi - from the hypothesis
exit - he/she goes out
exitus acta probat - the outcome justifies the deed
ex libris - from the library of
ex more - according to custom
ex officio - by right of office
ex parte - on behalf of one party only
ex post facto - from what is done afterward
ex proprio motu - voluntarily
ex silentio - from silence (from lack of contrary evidence)
extemore - without premeditation
ex voto - according to one's vow
facile princeps - acknowledged leader
facta, non verba - deeds, not words
factum est - it is done
fama semper vivat - may his/her fame last forever
favete linguis - to keep a (religious) silence
feci (fecit) - made by
felix culpa - happy fault
felo de se - suicide
festina lente - make haste slowly
fiat - let it be done
fiat lux - let there be light
Fidei Defensor - defender of the faith
fidus Achates - faithful Achates (friend)
filioque - from the son
filius nullius - a bastard
finis - the end
flagrante delicto - in the act of committing a crime
flamma fumo est proxima - the is no smoke without fire
floruit - flourished
fortes fortuna adiuvat - fortune favors the brave
fugit hora - the hour flies
fama semper vivat - may his/her fame last forever
fames semper vivat - may his/her fame last forever
fama semper vivat - may his/her fame last forever
facta, non verba - deeds, not words
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fama semper vivat - may his/her fame last forever
hic et nunc - here and now
hic iacet - here lies
hinc illae lacrimae - hence these tears
HJ (hic jacet) - here lies
HJS (hic jacet sepultus) - here lies buried
hoc erat in votis - this was among my prayers
homo homini lupus - man is a wolf to man
homo sum - i am a man
honor virutis preamium - honour is the reward of virtue
horribile dictu - horrible to relate
horror vacui - fear of empty places
hunc tu caveto - beware of this man
ib. (ibidem) - in the same place
i.e. (id est) - that is to say
ign. (ignotus) - unknown
ignis fatuus - foolish fire (will-o-the-wisp)
ignorantia legis neminem excusat - ignorance of the law excuses no one
ignoratio elenchi - an ignorance of proof
Imp. (Imperator/Imperatrix) - Emperor/Empress
imperium - absolute power
imprimatur - let it be printed
imprimis - in first place
in absentia - in the absence of
in actum - in practice
in aeternum - for eternity
in articulo mortis - at the moment of death
in banco - on the bench
in camera - in private chamber
incipit - begin here
index librorum prohibitorum - list of forbidden books
in distans - at a distance
in dubio - in doubt
in esse - in existence
in excelsis - in the highest
in extenso - at full length
in extremis - in extremity
in fine - at the end
infra - below, underneath
infra dig. (infra dignitatem) - beneath one's dignity
in futuro - in the future
in gremio legis - in the protection of the law
in infinitum - to infinity
in loco parentis - in the place of a parent
in medias res - into the midst of things
in memoriam - in memory of
in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Santi - in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit
in nubibus - in the clouds
in nuce - in a nutshell
in omnibus - ready for anything
in ovo - in the egg
in parvo - in miniature
in perpetuum - for ever
in personam - against the person
in pleno - in full
in posse - in possibility
in praesenti - at the present time
in principio - in the beginning
in propria persona - in person
in puris naturalibus - completely naked
in re - referring to
in rem - against the matter (property)
in rerum natura - in the nature of things
Jesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum-Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews
insculpsit - he/she engraved it
in se - in itself
in situ - in position
inter alia - among other things
inter alios - among other people
in terrorem - as a warning
inter se - between themselves
inter spem et metum - between hope and fear
inter vivos - between living (people)
in totidem verbis - in so many words
in toto - completely
in transitu - in passing
intra vires - within the powers
in usu - in use
in utero - in the womb
in vacuo - in a vacuum
in vino veritas - in wine is truth
in vitro - in glass
in vivo - in the living (thing)
ipsi dixit - he himself said it
ipsissima verba - the exact words
ipso facto - by that very fact
ipso iure - by operation of the law
i.q. (idem quod) - the same as
ite, misse est - go, the Mass is finished
iubilate Deo - rejoice in God
iure divino - by divine law
iure humano - by human law
ius civile - civil law
ius gentium - the law of nations
ius primae noctis - right of the first night
iustitia omnibus - justice for all

K

L

L.S.D. (libra solidus denarius)- pounds, shillings, pence
lachryma Christi - Christ's tears
lapsus calami - a slip of the pen
lapsus linguae - a slip of the tongue
lapsus memoriae - a slip of the memory
laus Deo - praise be to God
lc (loco citato) - in the place cited
lector benevole - kind reader
lex domicilii - the law of a person's home country
lex fori - the law of the forum (country)
lex loci - the law of the place
lex non scripta - the unwritten (common) law
lex scripta - the written law
lex talionis - the law of revenge
licit - it is allowed
litterae humaniores - the humanities
literati - men of letters
locus classicus - classical passage
locus delicti - the scene of the crime
locus desperatus - a hopeless passage
locus in quo - the place in which something happens
locus poenitentiae - a place for repentance
LS (locus sigilli) - the place of the seal
locus standi - place of standing
longo intervallo - after a long gap
loq. (loquitur) - he/she speaks
lumen naturale - natural light
lupus est homo homini - man is wolf to man
lusus naturae - a freak of nature
lux mundi - the light of the world
M
MA (Magister Artium) - master of arts
magna cum laude - with great distinction
magnificat - it magnifies
magnum opus - the greatest piece of work (of an artist)
mala fide - in bad faith
mare clausum - a closed sea
mare liberum - an open sea
mare nostrum - our sea (Mediterranean)
mater - mother
Mater Dolorosa - sorrowful mother (Virgin Mary)
materfamilias - mother of family
materia medica - medical matter
maximus in minimis - great in little things
mea culpa - through my fault
memento mori - remember that you must die
memorabili - memorable things
memoria in aeterna - in everlasting remembrance
memoriter - from memory
mens rea - guilty mind
mens sana in corpore - a healthy mind in a healthy body
millenium (millennia) - a thousand year period
mirabile dictu - wonderful to behold
mirabile visu - wonderful to behold
miserere - have mercy
Missa solemnis - solemn Mass (high Mass)
mittimus - we send (to prison)
modus agendi - manner of operation
m.o. (modus operandi) - way of operating
modus vivendi - way of living
moratorium - a delay
morituri te salutant - those who are about to die salute you
motus proprio - of one's own initiative
multum in parvo - much in small space
mutatis mutandis - with the necessary changes
mutato nomine - the name being changed
N
nascientes morimur - from the moment we are born, we die
natale solum - native soil
natura abhorret a vacua - nature abhors a vacuum
nb. (nota bene) - note well
ne cede malis - do not give in to misfortune
necessitas non habet lege n - necessity has no law
nem. con. (nemine contradictice) - with no one speaking
nem. diss. (nemine dissentiente) - with no one disagreeing
ne nimium - not too much
ne plus ultra - no further
nihil - nothing
nihil ad rem - nothing to do with the point
nihil obstat - nothing stands in the way
nil desperandum - do not despair
nisi prius - unless previously
nolens volens - whether willing or unwilling
noli me tangere - touch me not
nolite prosequi - do not pursue
nolite prosequi - I do not wish to contend
nominatim - by name
non bis in idem - not twice for the same thing
non compos mentis - not of sound mind
non licet - it is not allowed
non liquet - it is not clear
non nobis, Domine - not unto us, O Lord
non placet - it does not please
non sequitur - it does not follow
noscere ipsum - know thyself
novus homo - a new man
nulla secundus - second to none
numen - divine power
numerus clausus - a restricted number
Nunc Dimittis - now let depart
nunc est bibendum - now it is time to drink
O
ob. (obit) - he/she died
ob. (obiter) - in passing
obiter dictum - something said in passing
obscurum per obscuros - the obscure by means of the more obscure
oderint dum metuant - let them hate provided that they fear
odi et amo - i hate and I love
olim - formerly
omnia vincit amor - love conquers all
opus Dei - the work of God
ora pro nobis - pray for us
ore rotundo - with full voice
o tempora! o mores! - what times! what customs!
P
p.a. (per annum) - every year
pace - by leave of
pace tua - with your consent
pacta sunt servanda - agreements must be kept
parenser patriae - parent of the country
partes iuris - partner in crime
patres patriae - parent of the country
passim - all through
pater familias - father of the family
pater historiae - the father of history
Pater Noster - Our Father
pater patriae - father of the country
patris est filius - he is his father's son
paucis verbis - in a few words
pax - peace
pax vobiscum - peace be with you
peccavi - I have sinned
peculium - property
pendente lite - while a suit is pending
per ardua ad astra - through difficulties to the stars
per annum - yearly
per capita - per head
per cent (per centum) - per hundred
per contra - on the contrary
per diem - daily
per mensem - monthly
per pro (per procurationem) - by delegation to
perpetuum mobile - perpetual motion
per se - by itself
persona (non) grata - (un)welcome person
petitio principii - an assumption at the start
pinxit - he/she painted it
placet - it pleases
pleno iure - with full authority
pm (post meridiem) - after midday
posse (posse comitatus) - the force of the country
post bellum - after the war
post factum - after the fact
post hoc - after this
post mortem - after death
post obitum - after death
post partum - after childbirth
pr (per rectum) - through the rectum
praemonitus, praemunitus - forewarned, forearmed
prima facie - at first sight
primus inter pares - first among equals
prn (pro re nata) - as needed
probatum est - it has been proved
pro bono (pro bono publico) - for the good of the public
pro forma - as a matter of formality
pro hac vice - for this occasion
pro memoria - for a memorial
pro nunc - for now
pro patria - for one's country
pro rata - in proportion to the value
pro tem. (pro tempore) - for the time being
proxime accessit - he/she came close
ps (post scriptum) - written later
quantum meruit - as much as he/she deserved
quid pro quo - something for something
quis custodiet ipsos custodes - who will guard the guardians
qui tacet consentit - who keeps silent consents
quo iure - by what law?
quandam - formally
quorum - of whom
quo vadis - where are you going to?
qv (quod vide) - see this thing
R
rara avis - rare bird
re - concerning
recto - on the right
redivivus - come back to life
reductio ad absurdum - reduction to the absurd
referendum - something to be referred
regina - queen
religious loci - the (religious) spirit of the place
requiescat in pace - may he/she rest in peace
res gestae - things done
res ipso loquitur - the thing speaks for itself
res judicata - thing already judged upon
respice finem - look to the end
res publica - the public thing
resurgam - i shall rise again
rex - king
RI (Regina et Imperatrix/Rex et Imperator) - Queen and Empress/King and Emperor
rigor mortis - the rigidity of death
RIP (requiescat in pace) - may he/she rest in peace
S
salve veritate - saving the truth
salve - hello
sanctum sanctorum - the holy of holies
sartor resartus - the tailor patched
satis - enough
sc. (scilicet) - that is to say
scala Caeli - the ladder of heaven
scala naturae - the ladder of nature
scandalum magnatum - scandal of magnates
schola cantorum - school of singers
sciri facias - cause (him) to know
sciripsit - he/she wrote it
sculpit - he/she engraved it
semper idem - always the same
semper fidelis - always faithful
semper paratus - always be prepared
senso lato - broadly speaking
senso stricto - strictly speaking
seq. (sequens) - the following (one)
seqq. (sequentia) - the following (ones)
seriatim - in order
sic - thus
sic erat in fatis - so it was fated
sic itur ad astra - such is the way to the stars
sic passim - without a day (indefinitely)
sine qua non - something/someone indispensable
siste, viator - stop, traveller
si vis pacem, para bellum - if you want peace, prepare for war
sl (sine loco) - without place
sp (sine prole) - without issue
spero melior - I hope for better things
spiritus asper - rough breathing
spiritus lenis - smooth breathing
Stabat Mater - the mother was standing
stare decisis - to stand by things decided
status quo - the current state of being
stet - let it stand
sua cuique voluptas - everyone has his own pleasures
sub dio - under the open sky
sub iudice - under a judge
sub lite - in dispute
sub poena - under penalty of law
sub rosa - under the rose (secretly)
suggestio falsi - suggestion of something false
sui generis - of his/her/its kind
sui iuris - of one's own right
summa cum laude - with highest praise
summum bonum - the highest good
suo iure - in one's own right
suo loco - in a person's rightful place
supra - above
sursum corda - lift up your hearts (to God)
sv (sub voce) - under the voice

T
tabula rasa - blank tablet
tacet - silence
te Deum - Thee, God
te igitur - thee, therefore
tempore - in the time of
tempus fugit - time flees
terminus ad quem - the end to which
terminus a quo - the end from which
terra firma - solid ground
terra incognita - unknown land
tertium quid - a third something
theatrum mundi - the theatre of the world
t.i.d. (ter in die) - three times a day
totidem verbis - in so many words
tu quoque - you likewise

U
uberrima fides - utmost good faith
ubique - everywhere
ubi supra - where (cited) above

V
v (verso) - reverse
v (versus) - against
v (vide) - see
vade in pace - go in peace
vade mecum - go with me
vaevictis - woe to the conquered
vale - farewell
variorum - of various people
veni, vidi, vici - I came, I saw, I conquered
venire facias - you must make come
verbatim et litteratim - word for word and letter for letter
verb. sap. (verbum sapienti sat est) - a word is enough to the wise
veritas nunquam perit - truth never dies
veritas vos liberabit - the truth will set you free
via - by way of
Via Crucis - the Way of the Cross
Via Dolorosa - the Way of Sorrow
Via Lactea - the Milky Way
via media - the middle way
vice - in place of
vice versa - in reverse order
vide - see
vide ut supra - see the above
vi et armis - by force and arms
virginibus puereisque - for maidens and youths
virgo intacta - intact virgin
vivat regina - long live the queen
vivat rex - long live the king
viva voce - with living voice
vixit - he/she has lived
viz (videlicet) - namely
v.l. (varia lecto) - variant reading
volente Deo - God willing
vox populi - the voice of the people
VR (Victoria Regina) - Queen Victoria