

Commonly Used Abbreviations or Phrases from Latin

ad hoc	“for this thing”	set up temporarily for a particular purpose e.g. an ad hoc committee
ad infinitum	“to infinity”	as in Latin
agenda (pl.)	“things to be discussed/done”	as in Latin but usually incorrectly used in the singular e.g. an agenda!
alias	“elsewhere”, “sometimes”	another identity
alibi	“at” or “in another place”	proof of not being in the location of a crime/misdemeanour
a.m.	ante meridiem – “before noon”	in the morning
p.m.	post meridiem – “after noon”	afternoon
anno domini (A.D.)	“in the year of (our) Lord”	as in Latin
ad nauseam	“to sickness”	to the point of being sick
bis	“two times”	as in Latin (Used in singing instructions.)
ceteris paribus	“with the rest of the things the same /equal”	all other factors held constant
cf.	confer – “bring together”	compare
c. or circa	“about”	approximately
compos mentis	“having mastery of (one’s) mind”	in full possession of one’s mental faculties
e.g.	exempli gratia – “by the grace of example”	for example
ego	“I”	sense of importance of self
etc.	et cetera – “and the rest of the things”	and so on

ex libris	“from the books”	belonging to the book collection of
ex post facto	“from the deed/fact, afterwards”	deduced or discovered after the event with the benefit of hindsight
gratis	gratia – “favour” or “kindness”	for no payment
habeas corpus	“may you have the body”	the right to be brought to trial within a reasonable period after arrest and imprisonment
ibidem	“there in the same place”	as in Latin
id	“it” (neuter)	that part of the personality which indulges the “libido”(=sexual urge) and/or behaves impulsively (psychoanalytical terminology)
id.	idem – “the same thing”	as in Latin
i.e.	id est – “that is”	that is...
in flagranti delicto	“in the blazing crime”	caught in the act
in loco parentis	“in the place of a parent”	as in Latin
in vitro	“in glass”	in a test tube
ipso facto	“by the very fact”	as in Latin
inter alia	“among other things”	among other things!
memento	“remember!”	a token to remember someone/something by
memo	memorandum – “something which is to be remembered/mentioned/spoken about”	as in Latin
mens sana in corpore sano	“a healthy mind in a healthy body”	as in Latin

modus operandi	“way/method of operating”	way of working
moratorium	Americanisation of classical Latin ‘mora’ – “delay”	an American politician’s decision to stop or delay doing something
nil	nil/nihil – “nothing”	nothing, no score
N.B.	nota bene – “note well”	as in Latin
omnibus	“with everything”; “for everyone”	a compilation of all the magazines/programmes; a means of transport all can use (“-bus”)
par	“equal”, “the same”	used in golf to suggest a target score for a hole which players attempt to equal; also “below par” meaning not up to the usual standard (of health, achievement)
post mortem	“after death”	examination after death
post partum	“after giving birth”	as in Latin
p.p.	pro persona – “instead of the person”	as in Latin. Used when a letter is being signed (with authorisation) on behalf of someone else.
primus inter pares	“first among equals”	an old description of the relationship between Prime Minister and Cabinet in the U.K.
pro bono	“for good”	in the public interest or for no money (American lawyers may work part-time “pro bono”.)
quid pro quo	“something given in exchange for something”	as in Latin; a £ sterling (pound) is still called a “quid”.
q.v.	quod videas – “a thing which you may see...”	as in Latin
referenda	“things which are to be referred/ carried back to the people”	votes on a single issue by all or part of the electorate. (Sometimes – ungrammatically - called “referendums”.)

scilicet	scirelicet - “it is permitted to know”	to wit, namely, that is to say
sic	“thus”, “in this way”	as in Latin
sine die	“without a day”	without a specific date being set for the resumption of (e.g. court) proceedings
sine qua non	“without which (thing)...not”	a <i>sine qua non</i> is something indispensable
status quo	“the state in which”	the existing/prevaling situation
sub iudice	“under a judge”	the subject of ongoing/incomplete judicial proceedings
subpoena	sub poena – “under punishment”	a demand to comply with a court request e.g. attendance in court, which imposes an automatic penalty if it is not obeyed
tempus fugit	“time runs away”	Time flies!
ter	“three times”	as in Latin
ultra vires	“beyond (his) powers”	as in Latin
viz.	from viet, a contraction of videlicet – “it is permitted to see”: the “et” resembled a “z” in medieval Latin script.	it is permitted to see; namely, that is

I forgot “mea culpa” (“it’s my fault”)

“alma mater” (“dear mother” – nurturing school or university)

***“carpe diem!” (“seize the day”!)
and probably many more.***

(but I must stop somewhere!)