

Common Latin Phrases

(Definitions from *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary - Tenth Edition*)

- **A priori**—adj. and adv. [literally, from the former] deductive; relating to or derived by reasoning from self-evident propositions; presupposed by experience; being without examination or analysis; presumptive; formed or conceived beforehand.
- **Ad hominem**—adj. [literally, to the man] appealing to feelings or prejudices rather than intellect; marked by an attack on an opponent's character rather than by an answer to the contentions made.
- **Ad infinitum**—adv. or adj. [literally, to the infinite] without end or limit.
- **Ad nauseam**—adv. [literally, to sea-sickness] to a sickening or excessive degree.
- **Casus belli**—n., sing. and pl. [literally, occasion of war] an event or action that justifies or allegedly justifies a war or conflict.
- **Caveat**—n. [literally, let him beware] a warning enjoining one from certain acts or practices; an explanation to prevent misinterpretation; a legal warning to a judicial officer to suspend a proceeding until the opposition has a hearing.
- **De facto**—adv. [literally, from the fact] in reality; actually.
- **De jure**—adv. [literally, concerning the law] by right; of right.
- **In medias res**—adv. [literally, into the midst of things] in or into the middle of a narrative or plot.
- **Lingua franca**—n., pl. lingua francas or linguae francae [literally, Frankish language] a common language consisting of Italian mixed with French, Spanish, Greek, and Arabic that was formerly spoken in Mediterranean ports; any of various languages used as common or commercial tongues among peoples of diverse speech; something resembling a common language.
- **Nolo contendere**—n. [literally, I do not wish to contend] a plea in a criminal prosecution that without admitting guilt subjects the defendant to conviction but does not preclude denying the truth of the charges in a collateral proceeding.
- **Non sequitur**—n. [literally, it does not follow] an inference that does not follow from the premises; specif.: a fallacy resulting from a simple conversion of a universal affirmative proposition or from the transposition of a condition and its consequent; a statement (as a response) that does not follow logically from anything previously said.
- **Per capita**—adv. or adj. [literally, by heads] equally to each individual; per unit of population; by or for each person—*per capita of any state in the union*.
- **Per diem**—adv. [literally, by the day] by the day; for each day; adj. based on use or service by the day; daily; paid by the day; n. pl. per diems; a daily allowance; a daily fee.
- **Persona non grata**—adj. [literally, a not-pleasing person] personally unacceptable or unwelcome.
- **Pro forma**—adj [literally, for form] made or carried out in a perfunctory manner or as a formality; provided in advance to prescribe form or describe items .
- **Sine qua non**—n., pl. sine qua nons; also sine quibus non [literally, without which not] something absolutely indispensable or essential.
- **Sui generis**—adj. [literally, of its own kind] constituting a class alone; unique, peculiar.
- **Tabula rasa**—n., pl. tabulae rasae [literally, smoothed or erased tablet] the mind in its hypothetical primary blank or empty state before receiving outside impressions; something existing in its original pristine state.