

**Ipsa scientia potestas est - Knowledge itself is power.**

## **Latin Phrases, Idioms and Proverbs**

### **A**

ab origine - From the origin.

ab ovo - From the egg; from the beginning.

absit invidia – Let there be no ill will; all envy aside.

Ab uno disce omnes – From one specimen judge all the rest.

ad extremum – To the end.

ad finem – To the end.

ad hoc – For this special object or occasion.

ad infinitum – To infinity.

ad interim – In the interim; for the meantime, temporarily.

ad libitum – At pleasure.

ad litem – For or during legal process. A representative is selected *ad litem* to speak and to act in behalf of a person who is incompetent.

ad nauseam – To the point of causing disgust.

ad rem – To the purpose; to the point.

Adsum – I am present; here.

ad summam – In short.

ad valorem – According to the value.

ad verbum – Word for word, verbatim.

advocatus diaboli – The devil's advocate; a detractor.

a fortiori – With stronger reason.

Age quod agis – Attend to what you are about.

ager publicus – Public domain.

aggregatio mentium – A meeting of minds.

Agnus Dei – The Lamb of God.

Aio, quantitas magna frumentorum est. - Yes, that is a very large amount of corn.

aliquis in omnibus, nullis in singulis – Jack of all trades, but master of none.

alter ego – another self.

A maximis ad minima – From the greatest to the least (Microsoft Word spellchecker says that for number agreement, it must be either “maximis ad minima” or “A maximis ad minimum.”)

Amici probantur rebus adversis – Friends are tested by adversity.

Amor omnia vincit (or vincit omnia) – Love conquers all things.

amor patriae – Love of country.

Anathema sit – Let him be accursed. From *Vulgate*, Galatians 1, 8 and Corinthians 16, 22.

Anno Domini – In the year of our Lord. Abbr. A.D.

Annuit Coeptis – He (God) has favored our beginning. (Motto for the reverse side of the great seal of the U.S.)

ante – Before.

ante bellum – Before the war.

ante diluvium – Before the flood.

a posteriori – From the effect to the cause; reasoning sequence opposed to a priori.

a priori – Reasoning sequence from cause to effect.

[a propos (or á propos) – apparently of French origin – Apt; to the purpose; at the right moment]

arbiter elegantiarum – A judge or supreme authority in matters of taste.

argumentum ad absurdum – An argument providing the absurdity of an opponent's argument.

argumentum ad hominem – An argument to the individual man; i.e. to his interest and prejudices.

argumentum ad ignorantiam – An argument based on the ignorance of an opponent.

argumentum ad iudicium – An argument appealing to common sense and judgment.

Ars longa, vita brevis – Art (is) long, life (is) short.

Artium Magister – Master of Arts.

Asperges – Thou shalt sprinkle; the ceremony of sprinkling holy water in High Mass

aurea mediocritas – The golden mean

aurora australis – A luminous phenomenon of the South Polar region similar to the northern lights.

aut Caesar, aut nihil – Either Caesar or nothing.

Aut vincere aut mori – Either to conquer or to die.

Ave Maria – Hail Mary; thus the angel Gabriel greeted the Virgin Mary.

## **B**

bona fide – In good faith

## C

cacoethes scribendi – The itch to write.

capias – literally ‘that you take’ - General name for writs for arrest.

Carpe Diem – Enjoy the present day.

casus fortuitus – A matter of chance.

Caveat emptor – Let the buyer beware.

Caveat venditor – Let the seller beware.

Cave canem – Beware of the dog.

Cena Domini – The Lord’s Supper.

Cepi corpus – A sheriff’s endorsement upon a writ of arrest after having made that arrest.

certiorari – A writ calling for a case in a lower court, or records of that case, to be brought before a higher court.

Cetera desunt – The rest are missing. (Found at the end of old segments of manuscripts, indicating that the remainder has never been located.)

ceteris paribus – Other things being equal.

circum – Around; about.

Civus Romanus sum – I am a Roman citizen.

Cogito ergo sum – I think, therefore I am (Descartes).

compos mentis – Of sound mind.

conditio sine qua non – A necessary condition.

Conquiescat in pace – Rest in peace.

Consummatum est – It is finished. (Last words of Christ on the cross.)

[contra – apparently of Spanish origin – against.]

Corpus Christi – The body of Christ.

corpus delicti – The body or object of a crime, as the corpse in a homicide or stolen goods in a theft.

Corpus Juris Civilis – The body of roman civil law.

cuique suum – To each his own.

culpa – Fault, guilt.

cum grano salis – With a grain of salt.

cum laude – With praise.

cum privilegio – With privilege.

## **D**

[Da capo – apparently of Italian origin – From the beginning; again.]

Damnatio quod non intelligunt – They condemn what they do not understand.

de facto – In fact; actually.

De gustibus non est disputandum – There is no disputing about tastes.

Dei gratia – By the grace of God

de jure – From the law; by right.

Delenda est Carthago – Carthage must be destroyed (Cato the Elder).

delirium tremens – A nervous disorder characterized by delusion, hallucination, and uncontrollable trembling of limbs: due to excessive alcoholic consumption followed by abstinence.

De mortis nil nisi bonum – (Say) nothing but good of the dead.

de novo – Anew.

Deo gratias – Thanks to God.

Deo volente - God willing. By God's will.

de profundis – Out of the depths.

desideratum – Something desired or needed.

Deus nobiscum, quis contra? – If God is with us, who is against us?

Deus vobiscum – God be with you.

Deus vult – God wishes it.

Dirigo – I direct. (The state motto of Maine.)

Divide et impera – Divide and rule.

Dixi – I have spoken.

Doctor Mirabilis – literally 'The Admirable Doctor' – Roger Bacon.

Doctor Subtilis – literally 'The Subtle Doctor' – John Duns Scotus.

Dominus vobiscum – The Lord be with you.

dramatis personae – The persons or characters in a drama.

Dum spiro spero – While I breathe I hope. (South Carolina state motto.)

Dum vita est, spes est – While there is life, there is hope.

Dum vivimus, vivamus – While we live, let us live.

## **E**

editio princeps – The first printed edition of a book.

Edo, ergo sum – I eat, therefore I am.

emeritus – Retired after long and worthy service.

E pluribus unum – One out of many; one composed of many.

ergo – Therefore, consequently.

Errare humanum est – To err is human.

esse quam videri – To be rather than to seem.

Est modus in rebus – There is a medium in all things.

et cetera – And so forth; and the rest. Abbr. Etc.

et nunc et semper – Now and always.

Et tu, Brute! – And thou also, Brutus.

ex animo – Heartily,; sincerely.

ex cathedra – With authority: since 1870 the Pope has claimed to be infallible when speaking ex cathedra.

excelsior – Higher, upward.

Exeat – Let him leave; a permit granting a student permission for temporary absence.

exempli gratia – By way of example. Abbr. e.g.

exeunt – They go out.

exit – He [or she] goes out.

ex libris – From the books of.

Ex nihilo nihil fit – Out of nothing, nothing comes.

ex officio – By virtue of office.

ex parte – From one side only.

ex post facto – After the deed is done; retrospective.

ex tempore – Without preparation; impromptu.

extra muros – Beyond the walls.

## **F**

Facilis descensus Averno – The descent to hell is easy.

facta, non verba – Deeds, not words.

factum est – It is done.

fait accompli – A thing already done.

Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus – False in one thing, false in everything.  
Legally, the entire testimony of a witness may be disregarded if some part of it is found to be false.

fama semper vivat! – May his fame live forever.

felix culpa – A fortunate mistake; a happy fall.

festina lente – Hasten slowly.

Fiat lux – Let there be light.

fiat voluntas tua – Thy will be done. Matt. 6:10.

fidei defensor – Defender of the faith.

fide, non armis – By faith, not arms.

fides et justitia – Faith and justice.

finis – The end.

Flagellum Dei – The scourge of God: name given to Atilla the Hun.

fortiter in re – With firmness in acting.

Frater – Brother.

## **G**

Gaudeamus igitur – Let us then be glad.



Gloria in Excelsis – Glory (to God) in the highest.

Gloria Patri – Glory be to the Father.

## **H**

habeas corpus – You have the body. Several legal writs begin with these words, and all generally call for bringing the party in custody before the court.

Hic et ubique – Here and everywhere.

hic jacet – Here lies.

hora fugit – The hour flies; time flies.

Humanum est errare – To err is human.

## **I**

ibidem – At the same place, as in a book. Abbr. *ibid.*

idem – The same. Abbr. *id.*

id est – That is. Abbr. *i.e.*

Jesus Nazarenus, Rex Iudaeorum – Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. Abbr. *I.N.R.I.*

in articulo mortis – At the point of death

in curia – In court.

in esse – In being; in actuality; in existence.

in excelsis – In the highest; on high.

in extremis – At the point of death.

in futuro – In the future; henceforth.

in loco – in place; in the natural or proper place.

in loco parentis – In the place of a parent.

in memoriam – To the memory of; in memory.

in nomine –In the name of.

in omnia paratus – Prepared for all things.

in perpetuum – Forever.

in re – In the matter of; regarding.

in situ – In its original situation.

in statu quo – In the former state.

inter – Amid, among, between.

inter alia – Among other things.

in toto – In the whole; entirely.

intra muros – Withing the walls.

Iipse dixit – He said it; a dogmatic saying or assertion.

ipso facto – By the fact itself; in the nature of the case.

## **J**

Jesus Hominum Salvator – Jesus, Savior of Men.

judicium Dei – The judgement of God.

jus canonicum – Canon law.

jus civile – Civil law.

jus divinum – Divine law.

jus gladii – The right of the sword.

jus sanguinis – The right of blood; legal right of heritage or descent.

## **K**

## **L**

Labor omnia vincit – Labor conquers everything.

lapis – A stone.

lapsus linguae – A slip of the tongue.

lapsus memoriae – A slip of the memory.

Latine dictum – Spoken in Latin.

lex – law.

lex loci – The law or custom of the place.

lex non scripta – Unwritten law; common law.

lex scripta – Written law; statute law.

Litera scripta manet – The written word remains.

loco citato – In the place cited. Abbr. loc. Cit.

## **M**

magna cum laude – With great praise.

magni nominis umbra – The shadow of a great name.

magnum opus – A great work.

mala fide – With bad faith; treacherously.

[mal a propos (or mal á propos) – apparently of French origin – Inopportunistly or improperly timed.]

Mare Nostrum – Roman name for Mediterranean Sea.

maragritas ante porcos – Pearls before swine.

mea culpa – My fault; by fault of my own.

me iudice – I being judge; in my opinion.

mens sana in corpore sano – A sound mind in a sound body.

meum et tuum – Mine and thine.

mirabile dictu – Wonderful to relate.

misericordia – Compassion, pity, mercy.

Missa cantata – Mass sung by a single priest.

modus operandi – Manner of working.

modus vivendi – Mode of living.

motu proprio – Of his own accord.

mutatis mutandis – With the necessary changes.

## N

Nec habeo, nec careo, nec curo – I want not, I care not.

ne quid nimis – Nothing to excess.

Nescit vox missa reverti – The spoken word can never be recalled.

nihil – Nothing.

nihil ad rem – Nothing to the point.

Nisi Dominus frustra – Unless God (be with us) all is in vain.

nolens volens – Whether willing or not; unwilling.

Noli me tangere – Touch me not.

Nolo contendere – literally 'I will not contest it' – A plea of a defendant by

which he submits to conviction, but without necessarily admitting his guilt.

non compos mentis – Not of sound mind.

non culpabilis – Not guilty.

non obstante – Notwithstanding.

non possumus – We cannot (comply).

non sequitur – It does not follow.

Nosce te ipsum – Know thyself.

Nota bene – Mark well, take note.

nulli secundus – Second to none.

nunc aut nunquam – Now or never.

nunquam non paratus – Never unprepared; always ready.

## **O**

Obiit – He (she) died.

obiter dictum – A thing said by the way.

odium theologicum – The hatred of theologians for one another; the bitterness of theological controversy.

Omnia vincit amor – Love conquers all things.

Omnia vincit labor – Labor overcomes all things.

onus probandi – The burden of proof.

opus – A work.

origo mali – Origin of the evil.

O tempora! O mores! – O the times. O the customs.

## **P**

pace – By or with the leave of.

pace tua – By your leave.

pars pro toto – Part for the whole.

partim – In part; partly.

passim – Everywhere; throughout; here and there.

pater – Father.

paterfamilias – Father of a family; household head.

Pater Noster – Our Father, the first words of the Lord's Prayer.

pater patriae – Father of his country.

patres conscripti – Conscript fathers; Roman senators.

pax – Peace.

Pax Romana – Roman peace; peace established by Roman might and security.

pax vobiscum – Peace be with you.

per annum – By the year; annually.

per capita – By the head; for each person.

per centum – By the hundred.

per diem – By the day; daily.

periculum in mora – Danger in delay.

per mensem – By the month.

per se – By or in itself.

persona grata – An acceptable or welcome person.

persona non grata – An unacceptable person.

post meridiem – After noon; afternoon.

post mortem – After death; an autopsy.

prima facie- At first appearance; at first glance.

primo – In the first place, in the beginning, at first.

principia non homines – Principles, not men.

pro bono publico – For the good of the public.

pro et contra – For and against.

pro patria – For country.

propter hoc – On account of this, because of this.

pro rata – According to this current rate; proportionately.

pro rege, lege, et grege – For the king, the law, and the people.

pro tempore – For the time; temporarily.

## Q

quam proxime– As nearly as possible.

quasi – As if; as it were.

quid nunc? - What now?

quid pro quo – Something in return; compensation.

Quis custodiet ipsos custodes? Who shall keep the keepers themselves? Who shall guard the guards?

quoad hoc – To this extent; as to this; as far as this is concerned.

quo animo – With what intention or motive.

quo vadis? - Whither goest thou?

## **R**

regina – Queen.

requiescat in pace – May he (she) rest in peace. Abbr. R.I.P.

res gestae – Things done; exploits; accomplishments.

res judicata – A suit already judged; a settled case.

rex – King.

Rex non potest peccare – The king can do no wrong.

## **S**

salve! – Hail.

sanctum sanctorum – The holy of holies.

semper fidelis – Always faithful.

semper idem – Always the same.

semper paratus – Always ready.

Sequitur – It follows. Abbr. seq.

sic – Thus; thus in the original copy: used parenthetically to the point out errors in a quotation.

sic passim – Thus everywhere; the same here and there throughout the text.

Sic semper tyrannis – May it always be so to tyrants.

Si Deus nobiscum, quis contra nos? – If God is with us, who can be against us?

Si monumentum requiris, circumspice – If you seek this monument, look around you.

sine – Without.



sine cura – Without care; without duty or responsibility.

sine dubio – Without any doubt.

sine qua non – Without which, not; a necessity.

spes – Hope.

sponte sua – Of one's own accord.

status quo – The existing condition or state of affairs at some particular time.

status quo ante bellum – In the state in which things were before the war.

suaviter in modo, fortiter in re – Gentle in manner, firm in action.

sub judice – Under (judicial) consideration.

sub poena – Under penalty; a legal writ ordering court appearance under penalty of punishment.

sub rosa – Secretly, confidentially, privately.

sui generis – Of its own unique kind; in a class of its own.

summa cum laude – With highest praise.

summum bonum – The chief good.

suum cuique – To each his own.

## **T**

tabula rasa – A clean, blank tablet; John Lock theorized that at birth, the mind was just such a blank tablet.

Te Deum Laudamus – We praise thee, O God; a hymn sung in both Roman Catholic and Protestant churches.

te judice – You being the judge; in your opinion.

tempori parendum – One must yield to the times.

tempus fugit – Time flies.

tempus omnia revelat – Time reveals all things.

te nosce – Know thyself.

terra nova – A new land.

totum – The whole; all.

tuum – Thine.

## U

una voce – With one voice; of one accord, unanimously.

uno animo – With one mind; of one accord, unanimously.

us supra – As above.

ut infra – As (stated) below.

## V

vade in pace – Go in peace.

vale – Good-bye, farewell.

Veni, vidi, vici. – I came, I saw, I conquered.

veritas – Truth.

via media – A middle course.

vide et crede – See and believe.

vide infra – See below.

vide post – See after; see the following.

vide supra – See above.

vi et armis – By force and arms; by main force.

vincit omnia veritas – Truth conquers all things.

virtute et labore – By virtue and labor.

virtute, non verbis – By virtue, not by words.

vis – Force; might; strength.

vis vitae – Vital force, the life force.

Vita brevis, ars longa – Life is short, art (is) long.

volo, non valeo – I am willing, but not able.

vox – Voice.

vox et praeterea nihil – A voice and nothing more.

vox populi, vox Dei – The voice of the people is the voice of God.