

# PLAIN ENGLISH FOR LATIN EXPRESSIONS

This Plain English lexicon is meant to serve as a guide to some common Latin expressions used in legal parlance.



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*Ab Initio* - from the inception  
*Actus Reus* - guilty act  
*Ad Hoc* - for this specific purpose  
*Ad Idem* - of same mind/in agreement  
*Ad Infinitum* - without limit/ without end  
*Ad Litem* - for the suit  
*Amicus Curiae* - a person assisting the court  
*Ante* - before  
*Audi Alteram Partem* - right to be heard  
*Bona Fide* - in good faith  
*Caveat Emptor* - buyer beware  
*Causa Causans* - the immediate cause  
*Causa Sine Qua Non* - a cause without which the thing or event cannot happen  
*Certiorari* - a form of judicial review where a court considers a legal decision of an administrative tribunal, judicial office or organisation. The review court then decides whether the decision was regular  
*Compos Mentis* - of sound mind  
*Contra Proferentem* - an ambiguity in a document is resolved against the person who drafted the document  
*Coram* - before/ in the presence of a person  
*C.A.V. (Cur. Adv. Vult.)* - the court has taken time to consider its judgement  
*De Bene Esse* - something that is done provisionally  
*De Facto* - in fact / in reality  
*De Jure* - by right / as a matter of law  
*De Minimis* - something so insignificant that a court may disregard it when deciding a case  
*De Novo* - for new

*Ejusdem Generis* - a word of general meaning following a list of specific examples is to be read not in its wildest meaning but is instead to be limited to matters of the same class or nature as the examples listed  
*Erratum* - an error  
*Ex Ante* - before the event  
*Ex Debito Justitiae* - something that is due as a matter of right  
*Ex Gratia* - as a matter of favour/ without obligation/ not legally necessary  
*Ex Officio* - by virtue of the office  
*Ex Parte* - by one party only  
*Ex Post Facto* - after the event  
*Forum Conveniens* - appropriate forum  
*Forum Non Conveniens* - inappropriate forum  
*Functus Officio* - office terminated (having discharged duty)  
*Habeas Corpus* - produce the person/ for production of the person  
*Ibid* - in the same place. The term is often used in footnotes to refer to a work cited in the previous footnote (s)  
*Ignorantia Juris Non Excusat* - ignorance of the law is no excuse  
*In Camera* - in private  
*In Curia* - in open court  
*In Extenso* - at full length  
*In Limine* - something to be decided by the court before proceeding further  
*In Pari Delicto* - equally at fault  
*In Pari Materia* - on the same subject / relating to the same matter

## PLAIN ENGLISH FOR LATIN EXPRESSIONS

*In Personam* - against the person

*In Re* - in the matter of

*In Rem* - against / in respect of the thing

*Infra* - below

*Inter Alia* - among other things

*Inter Alios* - among other persons

*Inter Partes* - among parties

*Inter Se* - among / between themselves

*In Situ* - in its original situation

*Intra* - within

*Intra Vires* - within the power of

*Ipsa Facto* - by the fact

*Jurat* - certificate of person empowered to administer oath or affirmation

*Lex* - law / body of laws

*Lex Causae* - law applicable to a claim

*Lex Domicilii* - law of a country where a person has a permanent and fixed home

*Lex Fori* - law of the court hearing the claim

*Lex Loci* - law of the place where something has happened

*Lex Loci Delicti* - law of the place where the wrong is committed

*Lex Situs* - law of the place where the property is situated

*Lex Loci Solutionis* - law of the place where the contract is to be performed

*Locus in quo* - the place in which

*Mala Fides* - in bad faith

*Mandamus* - procedure by which a higher court orders a lower court or government official to perform its or his duties in the correct manner according to law

*Mens Rea* - guilty mind

*Mutatis Mutandis* - with the necessary modifications

*Nemo Judex In Parte Sua* - no man should judge a case in which he is party

*Non Compos Mentis* - of unsound mind

*Non Est Factum* - not his deed. A plea that an agreement (originally a deed) mentioned in the pleading was not the act of the defendant

*Novus Actus Interveniens* - an intervening cause that disturbs the natural cause of events between the wrongful act and the final injury

*Obiter Dictum* - observations made in a judgement other than on the point decided

*Pari Delicto* - of equal fault

*Pari Passu* - equally without preference

*Per* - as stated by / statement made by

*Per Curiam* - by the court

*Per Incuriam* - through inadvertence

*Per Pro (pp)* - through another

*Post* - after

*Praecipe* - a written order to the court registry for inspection or issue of a document

*Prima Facie* - on its face

*Pro Rata* - proportionate division according to interest

*Pro Tanto* - to the extent of

*Pro Tempore (Pro Tem)* - for the time being or temporarily

*Qua* - in the capacity of

*Quantum Meruit* - the reasonable value of services performed by one person for another, as assessed by the court, in absence of an agreement

*Quantum Valebat* - the reasonable value of goods and materials supplied by one person for another, as assessed by the court, in the absence of an agreement

*Quaere* - to raise as a question or issue

*Ratio Decidendi* - point decided

*Res Integra* - a new or undecided question of law

*Res Judicata* - an issue already adjudged upon

*Res Ipsa Loquitur* - the thing speaks for itself

*Restitutio In Integrum* - restoration to the previous condition

*Semble* - it appears

*Sine Die* - without any fixed date

*Sub Judice* - in the course of trial

*Subpoena Ad Testificum* - an order to testify

*Subpoena Duces Tecum* - an order to produce documents

*Sui Generis* - something of its own kind / peculiar

*Sui Juris* - of full age and capacity

*Supra* - above

*Ultra Vires* - beyond the power

*Vide* - see / refer to

*Volenti Non Fit Injuria* - a person who knowingly accepts a risk or dangerous situation cannot claim compensation for any resulting injury

*Voir Dire* - the hearing of evidence and argument in the course of a trial to decide whether a prior statement or other piece of evidence is admissible