

Directions:

1. Number the paragraphs
2. Annotate the text.
3. Turn in a 1+ page reflection of the article by _____.

What the Romans did for us: English words of Latin origin

An extract from the [Oxford Dictionary of Word Origins](#).

As well as education, wine, roads, under-floor heating, and the fresh water system, the Romans gave us words and phrases. Far from being a dead language, [Latin](#) is alive and well, and may be found in a sentence near you.

English is full of words of Latin origin that came into the language by way of the French-speaking Norman invaders of 1066. But we also use many phrases that came into English later, typically in the 17th and 18th centuries, and remain in their original Latin form.

In Latin [index](#) referred to the ‘forefinger’ or ‘index finger’, with which you point. From this we got our term for a list of topics in a book which ‘point’ to the right page. When we decide to leave by a door marked [exit](#), we may not know that in Latin this means ‘he or she goes out’. The phrase [in flagrante delicto](#), literally ‘in blazing crime’, means in English ‘in the act of wrongdoing’, and particularly refers to sexual misconduct. If some is caught *in flagrante delicto* they are generally found in bed with someone else’s partner.

Let a person beware

If we want to say that someone really knows about something we might say that they are [bona fide](#), Latin words meaning ‘with good faith’. A remark that has no logical connection with a previous statement is a [non sequitur](#) – literally, ‘it does not follow’. A particular stipulation or condition is a [caveat](#), a word which means literally ‘let a person beware’. If a person is preparing to buy something, you might say [caveat emptor](#), ‘let the buyer beware’, to remind them that it is the buyer alone who is responsible for checking the quality of the goods before the purchase is made.

Someone who dislikes sailing might be very glad to find themselves back on [terra firma](#) or ‘firm land’. If they had heard too much of the delights of the sea, they might say that they had been lectured [ad nauseam](#), or ‘to sickness’. They might be wary of decisions taken on an [ad hoc](#) basis, Latin for ‘to this’, used in

Notation: Thoughts, Reactions, Questions, Connections, Definitions

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5 W's

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English to mean ‘created or done for a particular purpose’. Sometimes you have no chance to influence what happens, as things may be done in your absence, or [in absentia](#).

In 1992, following the marital troubles of her children and a disastrous fire at Windsor Castle, the Queen said in a speech that it had turned out to be an [annus horribilis](#). The term for a year of disaster or misfortune is an alteration of an established Latin phrase [annus mirabilis](#) ‘wonderful year’.

From Status Quo to Procul Harum

Changes are often received with apprehension, especially by people who would prefer to preserve the existing state of affairs or [status quo](#) – literally ‘the state in which’. The band Status Quo had their first hit, ‘Pictures of Matchstick Men’, in 1968 and are still going strong. Another band with a Latin name are Procul Harum, who released the enigmatic ‘A Whiter Shade of Pale’ in 1967. The band’s name is a misspelled version of a Latin phrase meaning ‘far from these things’ – it should really be *procul his*.

The legal world is full of Latin. If someone is not of sound mind they are said to be [non compos mentis](#), literally ‘not having control of the mind’. Journalists may sometimes feel frustrated at not being able to report freely on a case because it is [sub judice](#) ‘under a judge’ – under judicial consideration and so prohibited from public discussion.

Latin supplies a number of well-known mottoes. *E pluribus unum*, or ‘one out of many’ is the motto of the United States. In 1913 King George V approved *per ardua ad astra*, ‘through struggle to the stars’, as the motto of the Royal Air Force.

The long and short of it

Some Latin phrases lie behind our most familiar abbreviations. If we want to emphasize the importance of something, we may say or write [NB](#) – short for *nota bene*, or ‘note well’. [QED](#), pointing out that a fact or situation demonstrates the truth of what you are saying, stands for *quod erat demonstrandum*, ‘which was to be demonstrated’. A long list of items may finish with etc., standing for *et cetera* ‘and the rest’. Advancing age may be referred jokingly as *Anno Domini*, Latin for ‘in the year of the Lord’, which also gives us the abbreviation [AD](#). The passage of time inevitably leads to [RIP](#), short for *requiescat in pace*, ‘rest in peace’, although the same cannot be said to apply to Latin itself.

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