

Common Latin Abbreviations Used in Research:

A.D. *Anno Domini*. Used to date years by reckoning the date of Christ's birth, as opposed to B.C., the years "Before Christ." Literally, *Anno Domini* means "In the year of the Lord." Remember two important notes! *Anno Domini* does not mean "After Death." (If it did, there would be a thirty-three year gap between 1 B.C. and the crucifixion thirty-three years later). Also note the politically correct tendency is to use the abbreviation "CE" (Common Era) and "BCE" (Before Common Era). These abbreviations are an attempt to avoid the religious connotations of the Latin abbreviation. In spite of the name change, BCE. and CE still divide history according to the life of Christ, but when writing for a Jewish, Buddhist, or Islamic audience, keep in mind the CE and BCE are considered more polite and religiously neutral.

cf. *confere*. A Latin imperative suggesting the reader should compare and contrast one statement or idea with another one. Literally, "compare." Researchers often follow the abbreviation with a reference to an author or page number, suggesting the reader look for similarities and differences between what a previous citation has said with the subsequent source listed.

Usage: Some scholars think Hitler's *Mein Kampf* used genocidal ideas found in earlier anti-Semitic literature him (Smith 42), but others argue Hitler himself was the primary originator (cf. Jones 98).

c. *circa*. Used to show that a date is approximate. Literally, the word means "around," and it is sometimes abbreviated "ca."

Usage: Shortly after Henry IV seized the throne from Richard II, Geoffrey Chaucer died (c.1400 A.D.), perhaps due to old age.

etc. *et cetera*. And so on. This is the one Latin abbreviation most students already know, and the one they tend to overuse. Nine times out of ten, the phrase can simply be omitted. Note that *et* already means *and*, so it is redundant to write, "and etc." Literally, the Latin phrase means "and other things."

Usage: The problems of the Balkan Republics are numerous, including insufficient electric power, poor highways, rampant unemployment, hostile neighbors, etc.

e.g. *exempli gratia*. For example. Literally, "free as an example." It is usually set off by commas and seldom capitalized.

Usage: We have numerous problems to deal with before reforming welfare policies, e.g., the trade deficit, Medicare, and social security.

et pass. *et passim*. And also found throughout the subsequent pages or sections. Literally, "And in the following." The abbreviation typically appears after a citation of a single page, suggesting the reader look at that page first and then skim the material following for further discussion.

Usage: For further discussion of this important issue, see Smith 42 *et passim*.

ib./ *ibid. ibidem*. In the same passage or page quoted above. Literally, "In the same place."

Usage: One physicist compared the behavior of quarks to bowling pins (Jones 35). He also indicated that the "Charm" quark was like the bowling ball (*ibid*).

i.e. *id est*. That is more precisely. Literally, "it is." Commonly used to refine a general statement or provide additional information, this phrase is rarely capitalized and usually set off by commas.

Usage: "Jerry's girlfriend always managed to turn the conversation toward children, *i.e.*, the possibility of having children together; *i.e.*, the possibility of having *legitimate* children together, *i.e.*, toward the subject of marriage."

Ph.D. *Philosophiae Doctor*. "Doctor (or Doctorate) of Philosophy." It can refer to the individual as a title, or to the degree itself. Note that it is redundant to write, "Dr. McGillicutty is a Ph.D." unless the author seeks to distinguish him from medical doctors.

Usage: Joe Bob McGillicutty, Ph.D., is on the committee. Or, McGillicutty earned his Ph.D. in art history.

v. / *vs. versus*. "Against." Often used in abbreviations for legal trials. Literally, "Turned against."

Usage: In the case of *Roe vs. Wade*, the Supreme Court eventually decided that abortion was a medical right. Note that many lawyers prefer to use the abbreviation *v.* here. Don't confuse this term with "v.s." (*vide supra*) or the word *versus* with *verses*, a common spell-check error.

sic. Indicates a misspelling or error in a quoted source, in order to verify to the reader that the researcher did not create a typographical error, but rather indicates the way the word or statement appeared in the original source. Literally, "yes" or "even thus" in Latin. In editorial interpolation, often put in brackets.

Usage: There are, according to the writings of seven-year old Andrew McGee, "Manee wayes of riting words" [*sic*].

Less Common Foreign Abbreviations (But Still Worth Knowing)

a.v. *ad valorem*. In proportion to the value of something else. Literally, "To the value."

Usage: "The monetary worth of the dollar is figured a.v. the price of gold."

i.a. *in absentia*. In absence.

Usage: "With further evidence *i.a.*, it is impossible to provide a definitive answer." Or more commonly, "the criminal who had fled the country was tried and found guilty of murder *i.a.*"

MS. *manuscriptum*. A document, particularly an ancient or historical manuscript, that was not printed in a printing press, but rather drawn or written. Literally, "By hand." The term is capitalized when attached to a specific document's title, and the plural form is MSS. In British usage, only the final letter typically has a period. This abbreviation is often contrasted with TS, referring to a typeset document.

Usage: "MS Vercelli was found in Northern Italy, and it appears to be written in an Anglo-Saxon dialect."

P.S. *post scriptum*. The abbreviation indicates a last-minute addition to a letter or document. Literally, "After what has been written."

Usage: "That's all for now. Take care. Love, John. P.S. Don't forget to write me back!"

R.S.V.P. *Repondez S'il Vous-Plait*. "Please send a response confirming whether or not you will accept the invitation." The abbreviation is French rather than Latin. Literally, "Respond, if you please." Note that since *s'il vous-plait* already means "please," it is redundant to write, "please R.S.V.P."

Usage: "You are cordially invited to a wine-and-cheese reception at the Bradson's House. R.S.V.P. by Thursday afternoon."

S.P.Q.R. *Senatus Populusque Romanus*. The abbreviation was used in Roman times as a part of official government documentation. Today, the phrase is used to refer generally (and sometimes ironically) to the power and glory of a major nation. Literally, "The Senate and the People of Rome."

Usage: "The S.P.Q.R. has spoken, and now American soldiers must obey the call to arms."

s.p.s. *sine prole supersite*. "Without surviving issue." The phrase is used in inheritance laws to indicate that an individual has no children.

Usage: Since Mrs. Clayton died s.p.s., her six million dollar estate will revert to the City of Portland.

t.i.d. *ter in die*. "Three times a day." Used by older pharmacies and doctors to indicate that a medication should be taken three times a day.

Usage: "Aspirin, t.i.d., call if headaches continue."

viz. *videlicet*. "Namely." The abbreviation is often used interchangeably with *i.e.* Literally, "As it pleases."

Usage: He was a minor Duke in the House of Lords, viz. the Duke of Rochester.

vide. "Look" or "see." This phrase refers the reader to an earlier statement or definition within the body of the essay. The most common uses are "**vide** 63" (which means "see page sixty-three"), **v.s. *vide supra*** ("see earlier" or "look above on this page") and **v.i. *vide infra*** ("See below" or "Look below"). Don't confuse v.s. (*vide supra*) with vs. (*versus*).

Usage: "For the definition of *videlicet*, *vide supra*."