bonā fide
Literal translation: in good faith
More common meaning: genuine

In an English sentence: The store gave a discount to bona fide students.

Like antebellum, these two Latin words are sometimes written as a single English word: "bonafide." A bona fide price reduction is a real reduction, not just a fiction to attract buyers. "Bonafides" can also be a plural noun meaning "credentials." For example, a diplomat might present his bonafides to a foreign government.
carpe diem
Literal translation: seize the day
More common meaning: enjoy the day

In an English sentence: The teacher in the movie Dead Poets Society urged his students, "carpe diem!" - to make the most of the moment.

The Roman poet Horace used this phrase in a poem in which he warned against putting off too many things to the future. Horace knew that it is important to enjoy the present and to make good use of each day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literal English Translation</th>
<th>Original Latin</th>
<th>Line</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You should not seek to know, it is wicked, what end the gods will have given to me, to you, O Leuconoe, and do not try Babylonian calculations. How much better it is to endure whatever will be, whether Jupiter has allotted to you more winters or the final one, which now weakens upon the opposed rocks of the Tyrrhenian Sea: may you be wise, strain your wines, and because of short life prune long anticipation. While we are speaking, envious life will have fled: seize the day, trusting the future as little as possible.</td>
<td>Tu ne quaesieris, scire nefas, quem mihi, quem tibi finem di dederint, Leuconoe, nec Babylonios temptaris numeros. ut melius quidquid erit pati, seu pluris hiemes seu tribuit Juppiter ultimam, quae nunc oppositis debilitat pumicibus mare Tyrrenenum: sapias, vina liques, et spatio brevi spem longam reseces. dum loquimur, fugerit invida aetas: carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero.</td>
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case belli
Literal translation: cause of war

In an English sentence: The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was a case belli.

Remember the word bellum from the phrase ante bellum? Here is another form (case) of the word. The English word "bellicose" meaning "warlike" is a derivative of bellum.


**cave canem**

Literal translation: Beware of the dog

In an English sentence: The famous "cave canem" mosaic in Pompeii was like a "beware of the dog" sign on a gate today.

A modern dog owner posts a sign on his gate with the words "Beware of the dog;" a Roman dog owner living in Pompeii included the words "cave canem" on the mosaic in the entry way of his house. Canine in English comes from the word *canis*, the Latin word for "dog," and the Canary Islands were named for the dogs that were found there, not for canary birds.
caveat emptor
Literal translation: Let the buyer beware

In an English sentence: The family remembered the phrase caveat emptor, and arranged for an inspection of the house they hoped to buy before they actually made an offer on the property.

This phrase warns people to be careful when they hear about a deal that sounds too good to be true. The word caveat can be used by itself in English to mean a warning. Emptor is related to the English word "emporium" which means story.
**circa (ca., c.)**

Literal translation: around, approximately

In an English sentence: The poet Catullus was born *circa* 84 BCE.

You will see the abbreviation *ca.* or *c.* in history books when the exact date of an event is unknown.
**cogito, ergo sum**
Literal translation: I think, therefore I am

In an English sentence: René Descartes, a seventeenth century French philosopher, used the phrase *cogito ergo sum* when he was seeking proof of his own existence.

Remember that in Latin the pronoun *ego* "I" is understood with the verb *sum*. Descartes was a mathematician as well as a philosopher. You can thank Descartes for much of what you learn today in algebra. You might be interested to know that Descartes was frail as a youth and spent much of each day resting in bed.
confer (cf.)
Literal translation: compare

In an English sentence: In my dictionary, the definition of the word "benevolent" is followed by the abbreviation cf. and the word "malevolent." Cf. tells me that I should look up "malevolent" and compare the definitions of the two words.

The abbreviation cf. directs you to other entries in a dictionary. It is similar to the expression quod vide or vide meaning "which (you should) see" or "see."
Citius, Altius, Fortius

Literal translation: Faster, Higher, Stronger

In an English sentence: The Olympic skier proudly displays her gold medal with the motto "Citius, Altius, Fortius" in her home.

The motto of the Olympics is "Citius, Altius, Fortius." It was first used in the 1924 Olympic games in Paris, France. The word *citius* comes from the Latin word that means "to summon/call up" or "to violently set into motion." This is where we get the words *incite, excite, recite*. The word *altius* (from *altus, -a, -um*) is the root of *altitude*. The word *fortius* (from *fortis, -e*) is the root of *fortitude, fortify and fortress*. 
**cornucopia**
Literal translation: horn of plenty

In an English sentence: Have you ever seen a *cornucopia* as a Thanksgiving decoration?

*Ceres*, the Roman goddess of agriculture, is sometimes shown holding a horn shaped basket filled with vegetables, fruit, and wheat. This symbol of abundance is called a *cornucopia*. It is easy to remember that the word for "horn" is *cornu* if you think of the English word "unicorn." *Copia*, the Latin word for "plenty," is the root of "copious" meaning "plentiful" in English.

Related words:

- **Capricorn**  
- **copious**  
- **unicorn**  
- **cornet**

Greek word for horn:

- κέρας, ατος - kera/keratos  
- triceratops  
- rhinoceros
corpus delicti
Literal translation: the body of an offense
More common meaning: the basic element of a crime

In an English sentence: The victim's death was the corpus delicti for the charge of murder.

The English word "corpse" is derived from the Latin word corpus, meaning "body, but the corpus delicti is not always a corpse: corpus in this expression simply means any evidence that a crime has been committed.
**credo**

Literal translation: I believe  
More common meaning: a set of firm beliefs

In an English sentence: My personal *credo* is, "Honesty is the best policy."

*Credo* is a verb in Latin that means "I believe." Notice that the pronoun "I" is understood. The Christian (Apostle's) creed begins with this word; thus it has come to mean a person's whole system of belief.

- credulous
- credulity
- credible
- credence
- creed
- incredible
- incredulous
**cui bono**

Literal translation: for what good
More common meaning: to whose advantage, for whose benefit

In an English sentence: *Cui bono* is a question detectives ask when a murder has been committed.

Do you remember the expression *bona fide*? The word *bonus, -a, -um* is a Latin adjective that agrees in case, number and gender with the noun that it describes. *Bonā fide* is feminine, singular and ablative; *cui bonō* is masculine, singular and dative (for an indirect object.)
**cum grano salis**

Literal translation: with a grain of salt
More common meaning: with a little disbelief, not too seriously

In an English sentence: I took my friend's boasting cum grano salis.

You treat something *cum grano salis* when it sounds a little too good to be true. Similarly, when you take something lightly instead of seriously, you are taking it *cum grano salis*.

*sal, salis* = salt
*salary*

A Roman soldier was given an allowance to purchase salt - *salarium*. 
**cum laude; magna..., summa...**

Literal translation: with praise, with honor with great praise, with highest praise

In an English sentence: Everyone clapped for the students who graduated *cum laude*.

This Latin phrase appears on diplomas of outstanding students who have maintained a certain grade point average. The English word "*laud*," meaning "praise," comes from this Latin root, as does "*laudatory*," meaning "praiseworthy," and "*laudable*," meaning "commendable."

Students with even better grades may find the expressions "*magna cum laude*," meaning "with great honors," or "*summa cum laude*," meaning "with highest honors" on their diplomas. Remember that the *summit* is the highest point of a mountain.
**curriculum vitae (C.V.)**

Literal translation: lap of life
More common meaning: resume, summary of one's career

In an English sentence: Each job applicant must submit a *curriculum vitae*.

A horse race in ancient Rome had seven laps. Each lap was called a *curriculum*. We use the word "*curriculum*" in English to mean the material students learn in school, but your *curriculum vitae* summarizes both your educational background and your work experience.
**de facto**

Literal translation: from the fact
More common meaning: in fact, in reality

In an English sentence: Segregation still exists *de facto* in housing in some places.

*De facto* is the opposite of *de jure*
**de jure**

Literal translation: from law
More common meaning: by law

In an English sentence: Property deeds often used to contain *de jure* restrictions.

If you have read about the Civil Rights movement in the United States, you know that housing patterns all over the country were determined *de jure* until the 1960s. This meant that laws prohibited minorities from buying real estate in many areas. Latin students know that the Latin alphabet did not contain the letter j so Romans would have written this phrase *de iure*, not *de jure*. 
**de gustibus non est disputandum**

Literal translation: concerning tastes, there is to be no dispute

More common meaning: there is no accounting for tastes

In an English sentence: The waiter winced and said, "*De gustibus non est disputandum*" as the patron poured ketchup over everything on his plate.

In French, people say, "*Chacun à son goût," "Each to his own taste.*" In English, we say, "To each his own," or "Different strokes for different folks." And you may know an old song that goes, "You say tomayto, I say tomahto..." All of these expressions remind us that different people like different things.
**de minimis non curat lex**

Literal translation: the law does not care about the smallest things

More common meaning: the law is not concerned with trifles

In an English sentence: The court invoked the doctrine *de minimis* and refused to hear a case brought by the student over his broken pencil.

This maxim means that a court will not listen to frivolous suits. The phrase is also used in science to describe a negligible amount of a substance. If, for example, a food has only trace amounts of a containment, the level is regarded as *de minimis*, and the food is considered pure.