



The Catholic University of America
Writing Center Handout

Latin Abbreviations

What is a Latin abbreviation?

A "Latinate abbreviation" is simply an abbreviation that has a Latin root and is commonly used in English composition. Authors often borrow the use of Latinate abbreviations as a tool for concise citation because Latin uses so few letters and words to say so much.

Common Latinate abbreviations

The following are examples of Latinate abbreviations that are commonly used in English prose, most especially in academic writing:

- etc. = et cetera = "and the other things," "and the rest"
- et al = et alia = "and the other ones," "and the other (people)"
- i.e. = id est = "that is"
- e.g. = exempli gratia = "the grace of an example," "for example"
- cf. = confer = "compare"
- ibid. = ibidem = "the same," "in the same place"
- N.B. = nota bene = "note well"
- P.S. = postscriptum = lit. "the thing having been written afterwards"
- [sic] = sic = "thus," "yes"

Once you know the meanings of the abbreviations, you are surely on your way!

N.B.: If you still have trouble, though, don't hesitate to pick up your nearest writer's reference-book to learn more about abbreviations (See *A Writer's Reference* by Diane Hacker).