



Foreign Phrases

ad absurdum

(ad ab-sir'dum) [Lat.]: to the point of absurdity. "He tediously repeated his argument *ad absurdum*."

ad infinitum

(ad in-fun-eye'tum) [Lat.]: to infinity. "The lecture seemed to drone on *ad infinitum*."

ad nauseam

(ad noz'ee-um) [Lat.]: to a sickening degree. "The politician uttered one platitude after another *ad nauseam*."

aficionado

(uh-fish'ya-nah'doh) [Span.]: an ardent devotee. "I was surprised at what a baseball *aficionado* she had become."

annus mirabilis

(an'us muh-ra'buh-lis) [Lat.]: wonderful year. "Last year was the *annus mirabilis* for my company."

a priori

(ah pree or'ee) [Lat.]: based on theory rather than observation. "The fact that their house is in such disrepair suggests *a priori* that they are having financial difficulties."

au courant

(oh' koo-rah'n') [Fr.]: up-to-date. "The shoes, the hair, the clothes—every last detail of her dress, in fact—was utterly *au courant*."

beau geste

(boh zhest') [Fr.]: a fine or noble gesture, often futile. "My fellow writers supported me by writing letters of protest to the publisher, but their *beau geste* could not prevent the inevitable."

beau monde

(boh' mond') [Fr.]: high society. "Such elegant decor would impress even the *beau monde*."

bête noire

(bet nwahr') [Fr.]: something or someone particularly disliked. "Talk of the good old college days way back when had become his *bête noire*, and he began to avoid his school friends."

bona fide

(boh'na fide) [Lat.]: in good faith; genuine. "For all her reticence and modesty, it was clear that she was a *bona fide* expert in her field."

bon mot

(bon moe') [Fr.]: a witty remark or comment. "One *bon mot* after another flew out of his mouth, charming the audience."

bon vivant

(bon vee-vahnt') [Fr.]: a person who lives luxuriously and enjoys good food and drink. "It's true he's quite the *bon vivant*, but when he gets down to business he conducts himself like a Spartan."

carpe diem

(kar'pay dee'um) [Lat.]: seize the day. "So what if you have an 8:00 a.m. meeting tomorrow and a full day of appointments? *Carpe diem!*"

carte blanche

(kart blonsh') [Fr.]: unrestricted power to act on one's own. "I may have *carte blanche* around the office, but at home I'm a slave to my family's demands."

cause célèbre

(koz suh-leb'ruh) [Fr.]: a widely known controversial case or issue. "The Sacco and Vanzetti trial became an international *cause célèbre* during the 1920s."

caveat emptor

(kav'ee-ot emp'tor) [Lat.]: let the buyer beware. "Before you leap at that real estate deal, *caveat emptor!*"

comme ci comme ça

(kom see' kom sah') [Fr.]: so-so. "The plans for the party strike me as *comme ci comme ça*."

coup de grâce

(koo de grahss') [Fr.]: finishing blow. "After an already wildly successful day, the *coup de grâce* came when she won best all-around athlete."

coup de main

('man) [French] literally, hand stroke. Date: 1758. : a sudden attack in force

cri de coeur

(kree' de kur') [Fr.]: heartfelt appeal. "About to leave the podium, he made a final *cri de coeur* to his people to end the bloodshed."

de rigueur

(duh ree-gur') [Fr.]: strictly required, as by etiquette, usage, or fashion. "Loudly proclaiming one's support for radical causes had become *de rigueur* among her crowd."

deus ex machina

(day'us ex mahk'uh-nuh) [Lat.]: a contrived device to resolve a situation. "Stretching plausibility, the movie concluded with a *deus ex machina* ending in which everyone was rescued at the last minute."

dolce vita

(dole'chay vee'tuh) [Ital.]: sweet life; the good life perceived as one of physical pleasure and self-indulgence. "My vacation this year is going to be two uninterrupted weeks of *dolce vita*."

Doppelgänger*

(dop'pul-gang-ur) [Ger.]: a ghostly double or counterpart of a living person. "I could not shake the sense that some shadowy *Doppelgänger* echoed my every move."

ecce homo

(ek'ay ho'mo) [Lat.]: behold the man. "The painting depicted the common Renaissance theme, *ecce homo*—Christ wearing the crown of thorns."

enfant terrible

(ahn-fahn' tay-reeb'luh) [Fr.]: an incorrigible child; an outrageously outspoken or bold person. "He played the role of *enfant terrible*, jolting us with his blunt assessment."

entre nous

(ahn'truh noo') [Fr.]: between ourselves; confidentially. "*Entre nous*, their marriage is on the rocks."

ex cathedra

(ex kuh-thee'druh) [Lat.]: with authority; used especially of those pronouncements of the pope that are considered infallible. "I resigned myself to obeying; my father's opinions were *ex cathedra* in our household."

ex post facto

(ex' post fak'toh) [Lat.]: retroactively. "I certainly hope that the change in policy will be honored *ex post facto*."

fait accompli

(fate ah-kom-plee') [Fr.]: an accomplished fact, presumably irreversible. "There's no use

protesting—it's a *fait accompli*."

faux pas

(foh pah') [Fr.]: a social blunder. "Suddenly, she realized she had unwittingly committed yet another *faux pas*."

Feinschmecker*

(fine'shmek-er) [Ger.]: gourmet. "No, I don't think McDonald's will do; he's much too much of a *Feinschmecker*."

flagrante delicto

(fla-grahn'tee di-lik'toh) [Lat.]: in the act. "The detective realized that without hard evidence he had no case; he would have to catch the culprit *flagrante delicto*."

glasnost

(glaz'nohst) [Rus.]: open and frank discussion: initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985 in the Soviet Union. "Once the old chairman retired, the spirit of *glasnost* pervaded the department."

hoi polloi

(hoy' puh-loi') [Gk.]: the common people. "Marie Antoinette recommended cake to the *hoi polloi*."

in loco parentis

(in loh'koh pa-ren'tiss) [Lat.]: in the place of a parent. "The court appointed a guardian for the children, to serve *in loco parentis*."

in situ

(in sit'too) [Lat.]: situated in the original or natural position. "I prefer seeing statues *in situ* rather than in the confines of a museum."

in vino veritas

(in vee'no vare'i-toss) [Lat.]: in wine there is truth. "By the end of the party, several of the guests had made a good deal of their private lives public, prompting the host to murmur to his wife, '*in vino veritas*.'"

ipso facto

(ip'soh fak'toh) [Lat.]: by the fact itself. "An extremist, *ipso facto*, cannot become part of a coalition."

je ne sais quoi

(zhun say kwah') [Fr.]: I know not what; an elusive quality. "She couldn't explain it, but there was something *je ne sais quoi* about him that she found devastatingly attractive."

mano a mano

(mah'no ah mah'no) [Span.]: directly or face-to-face in a confrontation or conflict. "'Stay out of it,' he admonished his friends, 'I want to handle this guy *mano a mano*.'"

mea culpa

(may'uh kul'puh) [Lat.]: I am to blame. "His *mea culpa* was so offhand that I hardly think he meant it."

memento mori

(muh-men'toh more'ee) [Lat.]: a reminder that you must die. "The skull rested on the mantelpiece as a *memento mori*."

modus operandi

(moh'dus op-er-an'dee) [Lat.]: a method of operating. "Her *modus operandi* is to sugarcoat the truth so thoroughly that the news almost seems welcome."

mot juste

(moh zhoost') [Fr.]: the exact, appropriate word. "'Rats!' screamed the defiant three-year-old, immensely proud of his *mot juste*."

ne plus ultra

(nee' plus ul'truh) [Lat.]: the most intense degree of a quality or state. "Pulling it from the box, he realized he was face to face with the *ne plus ultra* of computers."

nom de guerre

(nom duh gair') [Fr.]: pseudonym. "He went by his *nom de guerre* when frequenting trendy nightclubs."

nom de plume

(nom duh ploom') [Fr.]: pen name. "Deciding it was time to sit down and begin a novel, the would-be writer spent the first several hours deciding upon a suitable *nom de plume*."

nota bene

(noh'tuh ben'nee) [Ital.]: note well; take notice. "Her postcard included a reminder, *nota bene*, I'll be returning on the 11 o'clock train."

persona non grata

(per-soh'nuh non grah'tuh) [Lat.]: unacceptable or unwelcome person. "Once I was cut out of the will, I became *persona non grata* among my relatives."

pro bono

(pro boh'noh) [Lat.]: done or donated without charge; free. "The lawyer's *pro bono* work gave him a sense of value that his work on behalf of the corporation could not."

quid pro quo

(kwid' pro kwoh') [Lat.]: something for something; an equal exchange. "She vowed that when she had the means, she would return his favors *quid pro quo*."

sans souci

(sahn soo-see') [Fr.]: carefree. "Their mood was definitely *sans souci*."

savoir-faire

(sav'wahr fair') [Fr.]: the ability to say and do the correct thing. "She presided over the gathering with impressive *savoir-faire*."

sic transit gloria mundi

(sick tran'sit glor'ee-uh mun'dee) [Lat.]: thus passes away the glory of the world. "Watching the aging former football quarterback lumber down the street, potbellied and dissipated, his friend shook his head in disbelief and muttered, '*sic transit gloria mundi*.'"

sine qua non

(sin'ay kwah nohn') [Lat.]: indispensable. "Lemon is the *sine qua non* of this recipe."

terra incognita

(tare'uh in-kog-nee'tuh) [Lat.]: unknown territory. "When the conversation suddenly switched from contemporary fiction to medieval Albanian playwrights, he felt himself entering *terra incognita*."

tout le monde

(too luh mond') [Fr.]: everybody; everyone of importance. "Don't miss the event; it's bound to be attended by *tout le monde*."

veni, vidi, vici

(ven'ee vee'dee vee'chee) [Lat.]: I came, I saw, I conquered. "After the takeover the business mogul gloated, '*veni, vidi, vici*.'"

verboten

(fer-boh'ten) [Ger.]: forbidden, as by law; prohibited. "That topic, I am afraid, is *verboten* in this household."

vox populi

(voks pop'yoo-lie) [Lat.]: the voice of the people. "My sentiments echo those of the *vox populi*."

Wanderjahr*

(vahn'der-yahr) [Ger.]: a year or period of travel, especially following one's schooling. "The trio took off on their *Wanderjahr* soon after they graduated, to circle the globe by bicycle."

Weltanschauung*

(velt'an-shou'ung) [Ger.]: a comprehensive conception or image of the universe and of humanity's relation to it. "His *Weltanschauung* gradually metamorphized from a grim and pessimistic one to a sunny, but no less complex, view."

Weltschmerz*

(velt'shmerts) [Ger.]: sorrow over the evils of the world. "His poetry expressed a certain *Weltschmerz*, or world-weariness."

Zeitgeist*

(zite'guyst) [Ger.]: the spirit of the time; general trend of thought or feeling characteristic of a particular period of time. "She blamed it on the *Zeitgeist*, which encouraged hedonistic excess."

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