# You Know More Latin Than You Think

By the History Nook

English has many words with Latin roots. In some cases, these have been adopted into the language purposefully for scientific names. This list includes words that were more naturally adopted into English through French, Spanish, Italian, Late Latin, and other sources, and some that were created within English (such as scientific terms). Sometimes the English word is derived from only one form of the Latin word, but to keep this list manageable, I have only included the dictionary form for each Latin word. This is by no means a complete list, but it will be updated as I discover more words.

Many Latin words have multiple or complex definitions that don't map perfectly onto English, but I have provided a basic meaning for the Latin words whose definitions differ from the English form we know today.

## — A —

| | |
|---|---|
| **Abduct** | abduco - to lead away |
| **Ablution** | ablutio - washing<br>ab - away<br>luere - to wash, atone |
| **Accelerate** | celer - quick |
| **Accept** | accipio - I accept |
| **Accident** | accidens - a chance occurrence |
| **Accurate** | acuo - to sharpen |
| **Addition, add** | addo - I add, insert, bring |
| **Admiration, admire** | admiratio |
| **Admittance** | admitto - I admit, let in |
| **Adolescent** | adulescens |
| **Adversary** | adversus - against |
| **Affirm** | affirmo - I affirm, declare |
| **Agriculture** | ager (agri) - field, territory, land |
| **Amiable** | amicus - friend |
| **Alias** | alias - at another time, otherwise |
| **Alternative** | alter - the other, second, another |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Altitude** | altus - high, deep |
| **Ambulance** | ambulo - to walk |
| **Amicable, amicability** | amicus - friend |
| **Amorous** | amo - I love |
| **Animated, animal** | animus - spirit |
| **Announce, announcement** | nuntius - messenger<br>nuntio - I announce |
| **Antique** | antiquus |
| **Annual** | annus - year |
| **Annunciate** | nuntius - messenger<br>nuntio - I announce |
| **Aperture** | apertus - open |
| **Apparatus** | ad-, to + parare, prepare, make ready |
| **Aqua** | aqua - water |
| **Ardent** | ardens - burning |
| **Arms (weapons), army** | arma - weapons |
| **Asylum** | asylum |
| **Atrocity** | atrox - harsh, fierce |
| **Audio** | audio - to hear |
| **Audacious** | audacia - bold, daring, brave |
| **Avid** | avidus - eager, greedy |
| **Auxiliary** | auxilium - help |

## — B —

| | |
|---|---|
| **Bellicose** | bellum - war |
| **Beneficial** | bene - good<br>facere - to make |
| **Brief** | brevis |
| **Bonus** | bonus - good |

## — C —

| | |
|---|---|
| **Callous** | callosus - hard-skinned |
| **Callus** | callus - firm flesh |
| **Campus** | campus - plain, field |
| **Capitol** | caput - head |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Capitulate** | capitulare - head/poll-tax or levy |
| **Captive** | captivus |
| **Casualty** | casus - misfortune |
| **Castle** | castellum - fort |
| **Cavern, cave** | caverna |
| **Celebrate** | celebro - to celebrate |
| **Cellar** | cella - storeroom, chamber |
| **Chant, chanting** | cantare - to sing |
| **Circumference** | circum - round, around |
| **Clamour** | clamor - shout |
| **Closed** | clausus |
| **Cognate** | cognatus - similar, related |
| **Commitment** | committo - I join, commit |
| **Complex** | complexus - embrace, encircling, woven together |
| **Concurrent** | concurro - run together |
| **Conscribe, conscription** | conscribo - I recruit, enrol |
| **Conservation** | cōnservo - I keep |
| **Conciliate** | conciliō - I win over, reconcile |
| **Constitution** | constantia - persistence |
| **Contradiction** | contra - against<br>dico - I speak |
| **Controversy** | controversia - dispute, argument |
| **Copious** | copiae - affluence |
| **Corporeal** | corpus - body |
| **Corpse** | corpus - body |
| **Course** | cursus |
| **Curate** | cūrō - I look after, attend to |
| **Custodian, custody** | custos - Guard |

## — D —

| | |
|---|---|
| **Defend** | defendo - I defend |
| **Defenestrate** | de- - down from<br>fenestra - window |
| **Deity** | dea - goddess<br>deus - god |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Delete** | deleo - I destroy |
| **Demonstrate** | monstro - I point out, show |
| **Dense** | densus - thick |
| **Dentist** | dens - tooth |
| **Descend** | descendo - I descend, go down |
| **Desire** | desīdero - I desire, long for |
| **Despair** | desperatio |
| **Detain** | detineo - I detain, hold back |
| **Dictate, dictation** | dico - I say, speak, tell |
| **Dictator** | dictator |
| **Difficult** | difficilis |
| **Dignity** | dignitas |
| **Dismiss** | dimitto - I send away, dismiss |
| **Diversion** | deverto - I turn off, find lodgings |
| **Divine, divinity** | divinus |
| **Domesticate** | domus - house |
| **Domination, dominium** | dominus - master |
| **Donation** | donum - gift |
| **Dormant** | dormio - I sleep |
| **Durable** | durus - hard, uncompromising |
| **Duration** | durare - to harden, to last |

## — E —

| | |
|---|---|
| **Ediface** | aedificium - building |
| **Ego** | ego - I |
| **Enchantment** | incantare - to bewitch |
| **Error** | erro - I am mistaken |
| **Evade** | evado - I escape |
| **Excited** | excito - I arouse, wake up |
| **Exercise** | exercitus - army, military exercises |
| **Exit** | exitus |
| **Expect** | exspecto - I wait |
| **Expell** | expello - I banish, eject |
| **Explorer** | explorator - scout, spy |
| **Extend** | extendo - I stretch out |
| **Extinguish** | exstinguo - I put out, extinguish |

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|---|---|
| **Extra** | extra - outside, beyond |

## — F —

| | |
|---|---|
| **Fable** | fabula |
| **Facility** | facilis - easy |
| **Fact** | factum - deed, act |
| **Factory** | facio - I do, make |
| **Famine, famished** | famas - hunger |
| **Feminine** | femina - woman |
| **Fidelity, fealty** | fidas - oath, faith |
| **Flammable** | flamma - flame |
| **Fortitude** | fortitudo - bravery |
| **Fraternal** | frater - brother |
| **Fortified** | fortis - strong, brave |
| **Fracture** | fractus |
| **Frustrated** | frustra - In vain |
| **Fugitive** | fugio - I flee, run away |

## — G —

| | |
|---|---|
| **Gaudy** | gaudium - joy |
| **Gigantic** | giga - (a) giant |
| **Gravitas** | gravis - serious, weighty |

## — H —

| | |
|---|---|
| **Habitat** | habito - I dwell, live |
| **Human, humane** | humanus - kind |
| **Honour** | honestas |
| **Hospital, hotel, hostel, hospice** | hospes (hospitis) - friend, guest, host |
| **Hostile** | hostis - enemy |
| **Hour** | hora |

## — I —

| | |
|---|---|
| **Ignite** | ignis - fire |
| **Ignorant** | ignoro - I do not recognise, do not know |
| **Imbibe** | bibo - I drink |
| **Immortal** | immortalis |
| **Immobile** | immotus - motionless |
| **Imperial, empire, emperor** | imperium - power, supremacy |
| **Impossible** | possum - I am able |
| **In** | in - in, on |
| **Incantation** | incantare - to bewitch |
| **Incognito** | incognitus - unknown |
| **Induced, induction** | inductus - having been led |
| **Insane** | insanus - crazy |
| **Insidious** | insidiae - an ambush |
| **Intelligence** | intellego - I understand, realise |
| **Interval** | intervallum - gap (between) |
| **Introspective** | intra - inside, within<br>specto - I watch |
| **Invade** | invado - I invade |
| **Invent** | invenio - I discover |
| **Investigate** | vestigium - track, footstep, footprint |
| **Ire** | ira - anger |
| **Irritated** | irritatus - to excite |

## — J —

| | |
|---|---|
| **Joker** | iocor - I joke |
| **Justice** | iustitia |

## — K —

## — L —

| | |
|---|---|
| **Labour** | labor - work |
| **Lactose, lactate** | lac - milk, juice of a plant |
| **Liberty** | libertas - freedom |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Library** | liber - book |
| **Lament** | lamentor - to lament, complain |
| **Long** | longus |
| **Lubrication** | lubricus - slippery |

## — M —

| | |
|---|---|
| **Manacle** | manus - hand |
| **Mandate** | mandatum |
| **Malice, malicious** | malus - bad, ugly, evil |
| **Maternal** | mater - mother |
| **Matrimony** | matrona - married woman |

You may be wondering where ‘me’ is, considering the Latin word for ‘me’ is ‘me’. Linguists have agreed that ‘me’ came into English via the Germanic language family. The English and Latin ‘me’ do share the same root in PIE word *me-

| | |
|---|---|
| **Member** | membrum - limb |
| **Menstrual** | mensis - month |
| **Military** | miles - soldier |
| **Minor, minority** | minor - smaller |
| **Minute (small thing)** | minuere - to make small |
| **Minute (time)** | minuta - a small thing |
| **Miracle** | mirus - wonderful, astonishing, strange<br>miraculum - Miracle |
| **Misery** | miser |
| **Mountain** | mons |
| **Mortuary, morbid** | mort - death |
| **Move** | moveo - I move |
| **Multitudes** | multitudo - crowd |
| **Mural** | murus - wall |

## — N —

| | |
|---|---|
| **Narration** | narro - I tell, narrate |
| **Nasal** | nasus |
| **Nautical** | nauticus |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Naval, navy** | navis - ship |
| **Necessary** | necesse - necessary |
| **Nepotism** | nepos - grandson |
| **Nihilism, nihilistic** | nihil - nothing |
| **Nocturnal** | nox, noctis - night |
| **Noble** | nobilis - aristocrat, well-known person |
| **Noon** | nona - nine |

In Rome, ‘noon’ meant the ninth hour of the day, which for the Romans who started their day at dawn (or 6 am) would have been 3 pm)

| | |
|---|---|
| **Novice** | novus - new |

Words relating to ‘new’ that begin with ne- are Germanic words, whereas those that start with no- are Latin

| | |
|---|---|
| **Nude** | nudus |
| **Null** | nulus - none, not any |

## — O —

| | |
|---|---|
| **Obsess, obsessed** | obses - hostage<br>obsideo - to besiege |
| **Occasion** | occasio - opportunity |
| **Odious** | odium |
| **Optimum** | optimus - very good, excellent |

## — P —

| | |
|---|---|
| **Pacify** | pax - peace |
| **Parent** | parens |
| **Pastor (clergy)** | pastor - shepherd |
| **Paternal** | pater - father |
| **Pauper** | pauper - poor |
| **Penultimate** | paenultimus - almost last<br>paene - almost<br>ultimus - last |
| **Peril** | periculum - danger |
| **Perish** | pereo - I die, perish |
| **Permutation** | permuto - exchange, swap |
| **Persuade** | persuadeo - I persuade |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Perturbed** | perturbatus - confused, disturbed |
| **Plural** | pluralis |
| **Portable** | porto - I carry |
| **Portal** | porta - gate |
| **Possible** | possum - I am able |
| **Prepare** | praeparare - make ready beforehand<br>paro - I prepare |
| **Primal, prime** | primus - first |
| **Proceed** | procedo - I advance |
| **Prodigy** | prodigium - portent, omen, marvel |
| **Prohibit** | prohibeo - I prevent |
| **Promise** | promissum |
| **Proximity** | proximus - next |
| **Public** | publicus - public, official |
| **Pugnacious** | pugna - battle, fight |

## — Q —

| | |
|---|---|
| **Quasi** | quasi - as, as if she were |
| **Quiet** | quies - rest |

## — R —

| | |
|---|---|
| **Rapid** | rapidus |
| **Recede** | recedo - I retire, depart |
| **Recuperate** | recupero - I recover |
| **Reduction** | reductio - I bring back |
| **Regal** | regina - queen<br>rex, regis - king |
| **Relic** | reliquus - rest of, remaining, surviving |
| **Religion, religious** | religio |
| **Relinquish** | relinquo - I leave behind |
| **Remission** | remitto - I send back |
| **Remove** | removeo - I move away, remove, withdraw |
| **Repel** | repello - I repel |
| **Response** | responsum |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Respondeo - I reply |

## — S —

| | |
|---|---|
| **Sacrifice** | sacrifico - I offer, perform a sacrifice |
| **Salute** | saluto - I greet, welcome |
| **Sanguine** | sanguis - blood |
| **Scribe** | scriba - clerk<br>scribere - to write |
| **Second** | secundus |
| **Sedentary** | sedes - seat |
| **Senator** | senex - old man |
| **Sense** | sentio - I feel, notice, perceive |
| **Servitude, service** | servus - slave |
| **Signal** | signum - military standard, sign, signal |
| **Silence** | silentium |
| **Similar** | similis |
| **Situated** | situs |
| **Society** | socius - ally, friend |
| **Solitude** | solus - alone |
| **Space** | spatium - expanse, interval |
| **Spectacle** | spectaculum |
| **Spectate** | specto - I watch |
| **Stable** | stabilis |
| **Statue** | statua |
| **Stipend** | stipendium - pay |
| **Summit** | summum |
| **Supplication** | supplicium - punishment |

## — T —

| | |
|---|---|
| **Tangible** | tangere - to touch |
| **Tempest** | tempestas - storm |
| **Temple** | templum - temple |
| **Temporal** | tempus - time |
| **Temptation** | tempto - I test, try |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Terror** | terreo - I frighten |
| **Timid** | timeo - I fear |
| **Total** | totus - whole |
| **Trade** | trado - I hand over |
| **Transcend** | transcendo - I cross, climb over |
| **Transfer** | transfero - I transfer |
| **Transit** | transeo - I go over |
| **Tribunal** | tribunal - platform |
| **Tumultuous** | tumultus - uproar |

## — U —

| | |
|---|---|
| **Ubiquitous** | ubique - everywhere |
| **Ululation** | Ululo - I howl |
| **Umbra** | umbra |
| **Urban** | urbs - city |
| **Utility** | utilis - useful |

## — V —

| | |
|---|---|
| **Vehemently** | vehementer |
| **Vendor** | vendo - I sell |
| **Venom** | venenum - poison |
| **Ventriloquist** | venter - stomach<br>loquor - to speak, say, utter, tell |
| **Verb** | verbum - word |

World also sounds like it should come from ‘verb’, but it has Germanic roots.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Vestigial** | vestigium - track, footstep, footprint |
| **Vestments** | vestimenta |
| **Veto** | veto - I forbid |
| **Via** | via - the way, road, path |
| **Vicinity** | vīcus - village |
| **Victory** | victoria |
| **Video** | video - I see |
| **Virile** | vir, viri - man, husband |
| **Virtue** | virtus - courage, virtue |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Vivacious** | vivus - alive, living |
| **Volition** | volo - I wish |
| **Vulnerable** | vulnus - wound |

## — W —

## — X —

## — Y —

## — Z —