

ROOT OF THE DAY

leg / lect / lig — Latin *lex, legis (law)* and *legere* — to gather, choose, read · “law; gather, choose, read”

legislate — leg (law) + lat- (carry) = to carry/bring law into being → to make laws

delegate — de- (away) + leg (send, depute) = to send with authority → to entrust a task to another

eligible — e- (out) + lig (choose) = able to be chosen out → fit or qualified to be selected

allege — ad- (toward) + leg (bring forward) = to put forward as a claim, before it is proved

negligent — neg- (not) + lig (pick up, gather) = not picking up → failing to take due care

sacrilege — sacri (sacred) + leg (gather, steal) = the stealing of sacred things → violation of what is holy

POWER WORDS

statutory *adj.*

“IRDAI is a statutory regulator, created and empowered by an Act of Parliament rather than by mere executive order.”

Meaning: fixed, created, or required by statute (written law)

Syn: legally enacted · **Ant:** customary

HOOK: STATUTE → statutory: it exists because a written law says so.

disarmament *n.*

“Hamas's agreement to surrender its weapons made disarmament the cornerstone of the 20-point Gaza peace plan.”

Meaning: the reduction or removal of a group's or nation's weapons and armed forces

Syn: demilitarisation · **Ant:** rearmament

HOOK: dis- (undo) + arm(ament) = to un-arm.

penetration *n.*

“India's insurance penetration, barely 4% of GDP, still lags well behind the global average.”

Meaning: the extent to which a product or service has been adopted within a market

Syn: market reach · **Ant:** exclusion

HOOK: how deep the product has 'penetrated' the market.

interim *adj./n.*

“In Anoop Baranwal the Court laid down an interim rule for appointing Election Commissioners until Parliament legislated.”

Meaning: for the meantime; temporary, provisional

Syn: provisional · **Ant:** permanent

HOOK: Latin interim = 'in the meantime'.

expedite *v.*

“The amendment empowers special courts to expedite paper-leak trials and deliver speedy verdicts.”

Meaning: to make a process happen faster; to speed up

Syn: hasten · **Ant:** delay

HOOK: ex- + ped (foot) = to free the feet → move quickly.

solvency *n.*

“IRDAI's shift to risk-based capital is meant to protect insurers' solvency and, with it, policyholders.”

Meaning: the ability to meet long-term financial obligations; being able to pay one's debts

Syn: financial soundness · **Ant:** insolvency

HOOK: SOLVE your debts → solvency.

adjudicate *v.*

“Under Article 262 a tribunal, not the ordinary courts, may adjudicate inter-state river-water disputes such as the Cauvery row.”

Meaning: to make a formal, binding judgment on a disputed matter

Syn: to judge · **Ant:** to leave unresolved

HOOK: ad- (to) + judic (judge) = to bring a matter to a judge.

riparian *adj.*

“A downstream riparian state may object to any upstream dam that threatens its rightful share of a shared river.”

Meaning: relating to, or situated on, the bank of a river; (of a state) sharing a river

Syn: riverside · **Ant:** landlocked

HOOK: Latin ripa = riverbank → riparian rights belong to those on the bank.

multipolarity *n.*

“BRICS champions a multipolarity in which power is shared among several centres rather than dominated by one superpower.”

Meaning: a global order in which power is distributed among several dominant states

Syn: many-centred order · **Ant:** unipolarity

HOOK: multi (many) + pole = many power-poles, not one.

insulate *v.*

“Petitioners argue the selection panel must insulate the Election Commission from executive control.”

Meaning: to protect something from outside influence or interference

Syn: shield · **Ant:** expose

HOOK: Latin insula (island) → to make something an island, cut off from pressure.

greenfield *adj.*

“The BHAVYA-Rasayan scheme funds three greenfield chemical parks built on entirely new, undeveloped sites.”

Meaning: (of a project) undertaken on previously undeveloped land, starting from scratch

Syn: from-scratch · **Ant:** brownfield

HOOK: a fresh GREEN FIELD with nothing built on it yet.

dilute *v.*

“Critics say replacing the CJI with a Cabinet Minister on the panel would dilute the poll body's independence.”

Meaning: to weaken the force, strength, or purity of something

Syn: water down · **Ant:** strengthen

HOOK: like adding water to a drink — it weakens it.

CONFUSABLE PAIRS — DON'T MIX THESE UP

council *vs* **counsel**

council: an assembly or advisory body of people (noun)

counsel: advice; or a lawyer who conducts a case (noun/verb)

TIP: A counCIL is a Civic body; counSEL gives adviSE / is your lawyer.

canvass *vs* **canvas**

canvass: to solicit votes or opinions; to examine thoroughly (verb)

canvas: a strong cloth used for tents or for painting (noun)

TIP: You canvaSS for voteS (double s); a canvaS is a single cloth.

elicit *vs* **illicit**

elicit: to draw out a response, fact, or reaction (verb)

illicit: forbidden by law or rules; illegal (adjective)

TIP: You Elicit an answer (E = draw out); an iLLicit act is iLLegal.

ordinance *vs* **ordnance**

ordinance: a law or decree, especially one issued by the executive

ordnance: military weapons, ammunition and artillery

TIP: ordinANCE governs (like an Act); ordnANCE goes BANG.

eminent *vs* **imminent**

eminent: famous, distinguished, highly respected

imminent: about to happen very soon

TIP: An Eminent jurist is Exalted; an Imminent danger is Incoming.

IDIOMS & ONE-WORD SUBSTITUTION

One-word substitution

• the right to vote in political elections → **suffrage**



Idioms in context

- **bury the hatchet** — to end a quarrel or conflict and make peace
“With Hamas agreeing to disarm, the warring sides moved at last to bury the hatchet.”
- **hold all the cards** — to be in the most powerful or advantageous position in a situation
“With a two-to-one majority on the selection panel, critics say the executive holds all the cards.”
- **a shot in the arm** — a sudden boost of energy, confidence, or encouragement
“The decision to permit 100% FDI gave the insurance sector a much-needed shot in the arm.”
- **a watershed moment** — a turning point that marks an important change or new direction
“Diplomats hailed the signing of the 20-point plan as a watershed moment for the region.”
- **test the waters** — to cautiously try out an idea or reaction before committing fully
“India used its BRICS chairmanship to test the waters on reforming global financial institutions.”
- an expert who scientifically studies elections and voting patterns → **psephologist**
- a form of government in which power rests with a small, privileged group → **oligarchy**
- a system of government in which religious leaders rule in the name of God → **theocracy**
- a neutral third party who helps two disputing sides reach an agreement → **mediator**
- a sum of money paid as compensation for loss, damage, or injury → **indemnity**

WORDS IN THE WILD — FROM TODAY'S NEWSPAPER

- **cognizable** — (of an offence) one for which the police may arrest without a warrant and begin investigating without a magistrate's order
“The 2024 Act made the use of unfair means in public examinations a cognizable, non-bailable offence.” — *The Indian Express*, 31 Jul 2026
- **non-compoundable** — (of an offence) that cannot be privately settled or withdrawn by the victim; only the court can dispose of it
“Because paper-leak offences are non-compoundable, the accused and the examination body cannot simply compromise to end the case.” — *The Indian Express*, 31 Jul 2026
- **photonic** — relating to or working with photons, the particles of light
“Researchers paired an AI model with a photonic quantum computer to design peptides for a personalised cancer vaccine.” — *The Indian Express*, 31 Jul 2026
- **interceptor** — a missile or aircraft designed to detect and destroy an incoming threat in flight
“Project Kusha fields three interceptor variants able to strike targets up to 350–400 km away.” — *The Indian Express*, 31 Jul 2026

LEGAL & LATIN TERMS EVERY ASPIRANT MUST KNOW

- **audi alteram partem** — hear the other side; no one should be condemned unheard (a rule of natural justice)
- **quo warranto** — 'by what authority'; a writ questioning a person's right to hold a public office
- **de facto** — in fact; existing in reality even if not legally recognised
- **de jure** — by law; existing by legal right
- **sine qua non** — an essential condition; something absolutely indispensable
- **bona fide** — in good faith; genuine and without deceit
- **mala fide** — in bad faith; with dishonest intent
- **ipso facto** — by that very fact; as an automatic and direct consequence
- **sui generis** — of its own kind; unique, in a class by itself
- **pari passu** — on an equal footing; ranking equally, without preference
- **inter alia** — among other things
- **stare decisis** — to stand by decided cases; the doctrine that courts follow precedent

PRACTICE DRILL

1. The word 'adjudicate' most nearly means to:
A) formally judge and settle a dispute · B) postpone a decision indefinitely · C) file an appeal against a verdict · D) negotiate a private compromise out of court
2. A 'riparian' state is one that:
A) is completely surrounded by land · B) has no access to any fresh water · C) lies along the bank of a river · D) shares a long border with the sea
3. To 'expedite' a trial is to:
A) make it happen faster · B) put it off to a later date · C) dismiss it without a hearing · D) refer it to a higher court
4. A 'greenfield' project is best described as one that is:
A) focused mainly on renewable energy · B) an expansion of an existing plant · C) financed entirely by foreign capital · D) built on previously undeveloped land
5. A 'cognizable' offence is one in which the police may:
A) arrest only after a magistrate's order · B) register the case but never arrest · C) arrest without a warrant · D) act only if the victim files a complaint
6. Choose the correct word: 'The Governor promulgated an ____ to regulate the trade, later replaced by an Act of the legislature.'
A) ordnance · B) ordinance · C) ordination · D) ornament
7. Complete correctly: 'The volunteers went out to ____ for votes, unfurling a painted ____ banner.'
A) canvas ... canvass · B) canvass ... canvas · C) canvass ... canvass · D) canvas ... canvas
8. The maxim 'audi alteram partem' requires that:
A) courts must always follow past precedent · B) a matter once decided cannot be reopened · C) the accused is presumed guilty until cleared · D) no one be condemned without being heard
9. To 'dilute' the independence of an institution is to:
A) define it more precisely in law · B) strengthen and safeguard it · C) weaken or water it down · D) abolish it altogether
10. 'De jure' recognition of a State is recognition that exists:
A) by legal right · B) only temporarily and on conditions · C) merely in fact, without legal title · D) solely at the will of the United Nations

Answer key: 1-A · 2-C · 3-A · 4-D · 5-C · 6-B · 7-B · 8-D · 9-C · 10-A

ETYMOLOGY TRAIL

Parliament sat to legislate — from Latin *lex, legis* (law) and *legere*, to gather and read — passing a Bill to **expedite** paper-leak trials. Lawmakers may delegate power to special courts, but a negligent drafter who fails to gather the details invites challenge. Across the aisle, petitioners alleged that swapping the CJI for a Minister would **dilute** the Election Commission and leave no one eligible to **insulate** it from the executive. From the **riparian** riverbank to the negotiating table where old foes **bury** the hatchet, every act of statecraft — like every word — carries the roots it was gathered from.

