

ROOT OF THE DAY

duc / duct — *Latin ducere, ductum — to lead, to bring · “lead; bring; draw”*

induce — in- (into) + duc = lead into → persuade into an action

deduce — de- (from) + duc = lead from → reach a conclusion by reasoning

conduce — con- (together) + duc = lead together → contribute toward a result

produce — pro- (forward) + duc = lead forward → bring something into existence or before a court

abduct — ab- (away) + duct = lead away → take a person unlawfully by force

induct — in- (in) + duct = lead in → formally install a person in an office

subdue — sub- (under) + duc = lead under → bring under control by force or argument

POWER WORDS

assiduous *adj.*

“Counsel was assiduous in her preparation, reading every reported decision before the argument.”

Meaning: showing constant and careful attention; diligently hard-working

Syn: diligent · **Ant:** negligent

HOOK: Latin assiduus — sit beside the task and not leave it.

pellucid *adj.*

“The lead judgment was pellucid in its reasoning: three sentences to state the principle, two to apply it.”

Meaning: translucently clear; of argument, expressed with perfect clarity

Syn: lucid · **Ant:** opaque

HOOK: per- (through) + lucidus (bright): light passes through without a shadow.

capricious *adj.*

“An order that gives no reasons is liable to be set aside as capricious, regardless of whether its outcome was right.”

Meaning: governed by whim rather than reason; given to sudden unpredictable changes

Syn: arbitrary · **Ant:** consistent

HOOK: Italian capriccio, a sudden shiver: arriving without warning or reason.

perspicuous *adj.*

“The advocate’s argument was perspicuous: each step followed the last, no premise left unstated.”

Meaning: clearly expressed and easily understood; free from obscurity

Syn: clear · **Ant:** obscure

HOOK: per- (through) + specere (look): see straight through to the conclusion.

supererogatory *adj.*

“The court’s third reason was supererogatory — the first two sufficed to dispose of the appeal.”

Meaning: going beyond what duty requires; more than is called for

Syn: superfluous · **Ant:** essential

HOOK: super- (beyond) + erogare (pay out): paying more than the bill demands.

obloquy *n.*

“The judge bore the obloquy with dignity, knowing the unpopular ruling was correct in law.”

Meaning: strong public condemnation; the damage to reputation that follows

Syn: opprobrium · **Ant:** acclaim

HOOK: ob- (against) + loqui (speak): words spoken against you in public.

temerity *n.*

“Counsel had the temerity to argue that a Constitution Bench had misconstrued the text.”

Meaning: excessive boldness; reckless disregard of danger or opposition

Syn: audacity · **Ant:** caution

HOOK: Latin temere, blindly: acting without looking.

mendacious *adj.*

“The court found the defendant’s account mendacious and dismissed his defence in its entirety.”

Meaning: not telling the truth; given to lying

Syn: dishonest · **Ant:** veracious

HOOK: Latin mendacium, a lie: words full of faults.

incorrigible *adj.*

“The litigant was incorrigible: despite three adverse orders, he filed a fourth identical application.”

Meaning: not capable of being corrected, improved or reformed

Syn: unreformable · **Ant:** amenable

HOOK: in- (not) + corrigere (correct): nothing straightens it.

recondite *adj.*

“The point of admiralty law was recondite enough that even experienced maritime counsel had not encountered it before.”

Meaning: little known; dealing with obscure subject matter requiring specialist knowledge

Syn: abstruse · **Ant:** familiar

HOOK: Latin recondere, to hide away: few will find it.

CONFUSABLE PAIRS — DON’T MIX THESE UP

comprise *vs* **compose**

comprise: to include or consist of — the whole comprises its parts (v.)

compose: to make up — the parts compose the whole (v.)

TIP: The Constitution comprises twenty-two parts; those parts compose the Constitution. Never write ‘is comprised of’.

practical *vs* **practicable**

practical: useful in practice; sensible and effective (adj.)

practicable: capable of being done; feasible (adj.)

TIP: Practical advice works; a practicable remedy is one a court can actually order. Usefulness vs. possibility.

judicial *vs* **judicious**

judicial: of or relating to courts, judges or the administration of justice (adj.)

judicious: showing sound judgment; wise and careful in decision-making (adj.)

TIP: Judicial review is a court power; a judicious choice is a wise one. A judge can be judicial without being judicious.

imply *vs* **infer**

imply: to suggest indirectly without stating — the speaker implies (v.)

infer: to draw a conclusion from evidence — the listener infers (v.)

TIP: A statute may imply a duty; a court infers intent. Speaker implies; listener infers.

principal *vs* **principle**

principal: the main or chief one; the person on whose behalf an agent acts (adj./n.)

principle: a fundamental rule or moral standard (n.)

TIP: The principal rule is the chief rule; a principle is a foundational truth. Only ‘principle’ ends in -ple.

IDIOMS & ONE-WORD SUBSTITUTION

Idioms in context

- **to cut the Gordian knot** — to resolve a complex problem by bold, direct action

“The Constitution Bench cut the Gordian knot by ruling the scheme unconstitutional rather than remanding the matter.”

- **to split hairs** — to make unnecessarily fine distinctions that serve no practical purpose

One-word substitution

- one who investigates complaints by citizens against maladministration by public bodies → **ombudsman**
- defamation in written or permanent form, as opposed to spoken w libel
- the period during which a seat of authority is vacant between one l leaving and the next taking over → **interregnum**



"Opposing counsel accused the petitioner of splitting hairs when he argued the repossession notice had been served three days too late."

- **in the teeth of** — in direct opposition to; despite the force of the resistance offered
"The order was passed in the teeth of three consistent High Court judgments holding the reverse."
- **to cry wolf** — to raise false alarms so often that genuine warnings cease to be believed
"The government accused the petitioners of crying wolf whenever a new economic regulation was challenged as unconstitutional."

- a formal public declaration by a government or party setting out its policies and intentions → **manifesto**
- one who has fled his home country to escape prosecution or persecution → **fugitive**

WORDS IN THE WILD — FROM TODAY'S NEWSPAPER

- **demise** — in law, the lease or surrender of an estate; in shipping, a demise charter transfers full possession and control of a vessel to the charterer
"In a demise charter, the owner hands over the ship itself — usually without crew — and the charterer takes full possession and control, appointing the master and crew and bearing operating costs." — CLAT Gurukul Daily Brief, 26 Sep 2026 — 'SC on M.V. Nereus Progress: bareboat charter termination'
- **ornamental** — existing for appearance or form only; serving no effective function in practice
"Bar & Bench reported that he described the role of the Leader of Opposition on the committee as effectively "ornamental", because the Prime Minister and the nominated Minister together form a 2:1 majority." — CLAT Gurukul Daily Brief, 26 Sep 2026 — 'SC split verdict on CEC appointment act'
- **pendency** — the state of being pending; the period during which a matter awaits decision before a court
"According to the SCC Online report, the Bench urged that the Court explore setting up a permanent five-judge Bench to decide pure constitutional issues, observing that references had been pending for periods "between 5 and 20 years or more" and that such pendency "does not reflect well on the institution". — CLAT Gurukul Daily Brief, 26 Sep 2026 — 'SC split verdict on CEC appointment act'
- **bailment** — delivery of goods to another for a specific purpose, with an obligation to return or dispose of them as directed once that purpose is accomplished
"Indian law defines bailment in Section 148 of the Indian Contract Act, 1872 as the delivery of goods by one person to another for some purpose, on a contract that they shall be returned or otherwise disposed of when the purpose is accomplished." — CLAT Gurukul Daily Brief, 26 Sep 2026 — 'SC on admiralty: M.V. Nereus Progress vessel arrest'

LEGAL & LATIN TERMS EVERY ASPIRANT MUST KNOW

- **actus reus** — the guilty act; the physical element of a crime
- **mens rea** — the guilty mind; the intention or knowledge required to make conduct criminal
- **ab initio** — from the beginning; a void contract is treated as if it never existed
- **stare decisis** — to stand by what has been decided; courts must follow binding precedent
- **ratio decidendi** — the reason for the decision; the legal rule the judgment rests on, binding on lower courts
- **obiter dictum** — a thing said in passing; a judicial remark not essential to the decision, persuasive but not binding
- **ultra vires** — beyond the powers; an act exceeding statutory or constitutional authority is void
- **quid pro quo** — something for something; the exchange of value constituting consideration in a contract
- **res judicata** — the matter has been decided; a final judgment bars the same parties from relitigating the same dispute
- **in loco parentis** — in the place of a parent; assuming parental responsibility and its duties of care

PRACTICE DRILL

1. 'Induce', 'deduce' and 'conduce' share a Latin root meaning:
A) to see or look closely · B) to lead or bring · C) to call or name · D) to break or split
2. A public official subjected to obloquy is facing:
A) disciplinary proceedings under service rules · B) a formal contempt notice from the court · C) questions about eligibility for promotion · D) strong public censure that injures his standing
3. Choose the sentence that uses 'comprise' correctly:
A) The Constitution comprises twenty-two parts, twelve schedules and over four hundred articles. · B) The bench was comprised by three senior judges nominated by the Chief Justice. · C) Twenty-two parts comprise together to form the Constitution of India. · D) The Schedule of the Act is comprised by six numbered entries.
4. The part of a judgment that states the legal reason for the decision and binds lower courts is called:
A) obiter dictum · B) actus reus · C) ratio decidendi · D) ultra vires
5. In a demise charter, the charterer:
A) books only the cargo space and the owner keeps the crew · B) takes full possession and control of the vessel, appointing its own master and crew · C) mortgages the vessel to a bank as security for repayment of hire · D) divides crew costs equally with the owner for the duration
6. Under Section 148 of the Indian Contract Act, 1872, a bailment requires that:
A) the goods be returned or disposed of as agreed once the purpose is fulfilled · B) a formal written instrument be drawn up and signed by both parties · C) the goods be sold if the bailee fails to return them within ninety days · D) the bailor and bailee both be resident within the same jurisdiction
7. A judge described as assiduous in her work is one who:
A) delivers judgments known for their elegant style · B) resolves cases more quickly than any contemporary · C) challenges opposing evidence at every opportunity · D) gives persistent and careful attention to every matter before her
8. The maxim barring a party from relitigating a matter already conclusively decided is:
A) ultra vires · B) ab initio · C) res judicata · D) mens rea

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

ETYMOLOGY TRAIL

To deduce a sound rule from a statute, counsel must produce the apt authority — a pellucid judgment from an assiduous bench will conduce to clarity where obloquy and pendency once held sway. The principal rule of criminal law remains that actus reus alone does not establish guilt: without mens rea, even the boldest prosecution may fail, and res judicata will bar any second attempt at the same charge. When a demise charter is validly ended, possession converts to bare bailment; the incorrigible charterer who lingers becomes a bailee, not a lessee, and temerity in refusing to hand the ship back will not preserve legal title. The ratio decidendi of such ruling by stare decisis, and an interregnum of judicial silence is no licence for the ornamental argument that possession equals ownership.

