

ROOT OF THE DAY

cred — Latin *credere* — to believe, to trust · “believe / trust”

credible — cred (believe) + -ible (able) = able to be believed; worthy of belief

credential — cred (trust) + -ential = a document that entitles one to trust or belief

credence — cred (believe) + -ence = acceptance of something as true

incredulous — in- (not) + cred (believe) + -ulous = unwilling or unable to believe

accredit — ac- (to) + cred (trust) = to give official authority or trust to

creditor — cred (trust) + -or = one who trusts another with a loan, expecting repayment

POWER WORDS

credulity *n.*

“The forged Form-7 applications strained the credulity of the Election Commission, which refused to accept that 380 identical deletions were a coincidence.”

Meaning: a readiness to believe things too easily, without proper evidence

Syn: gullibility · **Ant:** skepticism

HOOK: cred (believe) + -ulity → believing too readily

probative *adj.*

“Pre-printed, pre-filled forms were highly probative of a coordinated plan rather than genuine individual objections.”

Meaning: serving to prove something; furnishing evidence

Syn: evidentiary · **Ant:** inconclusive

HOOK: probative = it PROVES the point

veracity *n.*

“The court tested the veracity of the petition against the official electoral record before admitting it.”

Meaning: conformity to truth; truthfulness

Syn: truthfulness · **Ant:** falsity

HOOK: verus = true → the quality of being true

germane *adj.*

“The judge ruled that the voter’s religion was not germane to whether a Form-7 objection was validly filed.”

Meaning: relevant and appropriate to the matter at hand

Syn: pertinent · **Ant:** irrelevant

HOOK: germane = genuinely related, like a close relation

sanguine *adj.*

“Policymakers were sanguine that CAFE Phase III targets could be met without hurting affordability.”

Meaning: cheerfully optimistic or confident about an outcome

Syn: optimistic · **Ant:** pessimistic

HOOK: once meant ‘full of blood’ → ruddy, lively, hopeful

candour *n.*

“The commission’s candour in admitting the lapse earned it more public trust than denial would have.”

Meaning: the quality of being open, honest and frank

Syn: frankness · **Ant:** evasiveness

HOOK: candidus = white, pure → clear, open speech

tenable *adj.*

“Counsel argued that a blanket ban on firecrackers was no longer tenable once green crackers offered a less restrictive alternative.”

Meaning: able to be defended or maintained against objection

Syn: defensible · **Ant:** untenable

HOOK: like a position you can hold (tenere = to hold)

corroborate *v.*

“The booth-level agent’s testimony was corroborated by the duplicated handwriting across all 380 forms.”

Meaning: to confirm or give support to a statement with evidence

Syn: substantiate · **Ant:** contradict

HOOK: co- (together) + robur (strength) → add strength to a claim

tacit *adj.*

“Official silence on the bulk deletions was read by critics as tacit approval of the irregularity.”

Meaning: understood or implied without being stated openly

Syn: implicit · **Ant:** explicit

HOOK: tacit = unspoken (Latin tacere, to be silent)

putative *adj.*

“The putative author of the objections turned out never to have signed them at all.”

Meaning: commonly regarded or supposed to be, but not proven

Syn: supposed · **Ant:** proven

HOOK: putare = to suppose → supposed, not confirmed

prevaricate *v.*

“When asked who had filled the forms, the official began to prevaricate rather than give a straight answer.”

Meaning: to speak or act evasively so as to avoid the truth

Syn: equivocate · **Ant:** confess

HOOK: prevaricate = to straddle, dodging a direct answer

adjudicate *v.*

“Only the Electoral Registration Officer is empowered to adjudicate an objection and delete a name from the roll.”

Meaning: to make a formal judgment on a disputed matter

Syn: arbitrate · **Ant:** abstain

HOOK: ad- (to) + judicare (to judge) → to judge a dispute

CONFUSABLE PAIRS — DON’T MIX THESE UP

credible *vs* **credulous**

credible: believable; worthy of belief

credulous: too ready to believe; gullible

TIP: A credible WITNESS can be believed; a credulous JUROR believes anything.

precede *vs* **proceed**

precede: to come before in time or order

proceed: to go forward or continue

TIP: PRE- = before; PRO- = forward.

affect *vs* **effect**

affect: to influence (usually a verb)

effect: a result (noun), or to bring about (verb)

TIP: A = Action (affect, verb); E = End result (effect, noun).

prescribe *vs* **proscribe**

prescribe: to recommend or lay down a rule

proscribe: to forbid or prohibit

TIP: PREscribe = PRESENT a rule; PROscribe = PROHIBIT (ban).

elicit *vs* **illicit**

elicit: to draw out a response or fact

illicit: illegal; not permitted

TIP: Elicit is a VERB (draw out); illicit is an ADJECTIVE (unlawful).

IDIOMS & ONE-WORD SUBSTITUTION

Idioms in context

- **the benefit of the doubt** — to believe someone’s account even though there is some uncertainty about it

One-word substitution

- a person who is easily deceived or tricked → **gull**



"The court initially gave the registrar the benefit of the doubt, until the forged forms proved otherwise."

- **to cry wolf** — to raise false alarms so often that genuine warnings are no longer believed
"If parties cry wolf over every result, the Commission may stop taking real complaints seriously."
- **to take with a grain of salt** — to regard a statement as exaggerated and treat it with skepticism
"Early turnout figures should be taken with a grain of salt until the final count is certified."
- **to split hairs** — to argue over tiny, unimportant distinctions
"Counsel was splitting hairs over the comma while the bench wanted the substance of the clause."

- a statement accepted as true without proof → **axiom**
- a belief or opinion contrary to accepted doctrine → **heresy**
- a government by officials, marked by excessive rules and routine → **bureaucracy**
- one who holds office but does little or no work → **sinecurist**

WORDS IN THE WILD — FROM TODAY'S NEWSPAPER

- **signatory** — a party that has signed a treaty or agreement
"India is a member and signatory to the PCT." — *The Hindu*, 1 Oct 2026
- **exemplify** — to be a typical or representative example of something
"This case exemplifies the most intellectually rich type of constitutional question." — *The Hindu*, 1 Oct 2026
- **mandated** — required by law or official order
"The norms carry a mandated 16.7% improvement in fleet fuel efficiency by 2032." — *The Hindu*, 1 Oct 2026
- **deceptively** — in a way that gives a misleading impression
"The issue is deceptively simple on the surface." — *The Hindu*, 1 Oct 2026

LEGAL & LATIN TERMS EVERY ASPIRANT MUST KNOW

- **prima facie** — on the first appearance; sufficient to establish a fact unless rebutted
- **onus probandi** — the burden of proof — the duty to prove a disputed assertion
- **bona fide** — in good faith; genuine and without deceit
- **mala fide** — in bad faith; done with intent to deceive
- **res ipsa loquitur** — the thing speaks for itself; negligence inferred from the event itself
- **uberrima fides** — utmost good faith — the duty of full disclosure, as in insurance contracts
- **audi alteram partem** — hear the other side; no one should be condemned unheard
- **locus standi** — the right or capacity to bring an action before a court
- **sub judice** — under judicial consideration and therefore not open to public comment
- **suo motu** — on its own motion; a court acting without a formal petition
- **ex parte** — from or for one side only, without the other party present
- **ipso facto** — by that very fact or act; as an inevitable result

RECALL CHECK — WORDS FROM EARLIER

estoppel (learnt 7 days ago) — meaning: _____

impugn (learnt 45 days ago) — meaning: _____

PRACTICE DRILL

1. A witness whose testimony can be trusted and believed is best described as:
A) credulous · B) credible · C) creditable · D) credential
2. 'Probative' most nearly means:
A) cheerfully optimistic · B) contrary to accepted belief · C) spoken without words · D) tending to prove a fact
3. The Latin phrase for the burden of proof is:
A) onus probandi · B) audi alteram partem · C) res ipsa loquitur · D) locus standi
4. To 'prevaricate' when questioned is to:
A) confirm a claim with evidence · B) make a formal judgment · C) speak evasively to avoid the truth · D) believe something too readily
5. Choose the word that fits: The court was asked to _____ the sale of the banned chemical, forbidding it outright.
A) prescribe · B) proscribe · C) precede · D) proceed
6. 'Incredulous' breaks down etymologically as:
A) in- (into) + cred (trust) = to entrust fully · B) in- (not) + cred (praise) = failing to praise · C) in- (very) + cred (believe) = believing deeply · D) in- (not) + cred (believe) = unwilling to believe
7. 'Candour' most nearly means:
A) openness and honesty · B) cautious optimism · C) evasive cunning · D) firm relevance
8. A fact that is 'germane' to a case is one that is:
A) supposed but unproven · B) able to be defended · C) relevant and appropriate to the matter · D) confirmed by a witness

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

ETYMOLOGY TRAIL

Latin **credere**, 'to believe', seeds a whole vocabulary of trust: a **credible** claim earns belief, a **credential** certifies it, and the court grants it **credence**. A **credulous** mind extends that trust too freely, while an **incredulous** one withholds it — and mere **credulity** is no substitute for proof. Sound advocacy asks not for blind belief but for **corroboration**: evidence that is **probative**, testimony marked by **candour** and **veracity**, never the **prevarication** of a witness acting in bad faith.

