

ROOT OF THE DAY

sequ / secu — Latin *sequi* (past participle *secutus*) — to follow · “follow”

subsequent — sub- (next, under) + sequ (follow) + -ent = following after in time or order

consequence — con- (together, with) + sequ (follow) + -ence = that which follows from an act; a result

obsequious — ob- (towards) + sequ (follow) + -ious = following another's wishes too eagerly; servile

sequester — from sequester (a trustee, one who follows terms) = to set apart or isolate; to seize property pending a claim

non sequitur — non (not) + sequitur (it follows) = a conclusion that does not follow from its premises

prosecute — pro- (forward) + secut (followed) = to follow a matter through; to pursue a charge in court

POWER WORDS

pernicious *adj.*

“Unverified health rumours can be as pernicious as the disease itself, because they spread faster than any official correction.”

Meaning: having a harmful effect, especially in a gradual or subtle way

Syn: injurious · **Ant:** benign

HOOK: per- + nex (death) → deadly through and through

proscribe *v.*

“The 2020 amendment did more than discourage attacks on doctors; it proscribed them as a serious criminal offence.”

Meaning: to forbid, especially by law

Syn: prohibit · **Ant:** permit

HOOK: pro- (publicly) + scribe (write) → write up publicly as banned

remiss *adj.*

“A laboratory would be remiss if it failed to report a breach in the handling of dangerous pathogens.”

Meaning: lacking care or attention to duty; negligent

Syn: negligent · **Ant:** diligent

HOOK: re- + missus (let go) → letting one's duty slip

conjecture *n.*

“The story of a broken test tube remained conjecture, since no official body confirmed any laboratory accident.”

Meaning: an opinion or conclusion formed on incomplete information

Syn: speculation · **Ant:** certainty

HOOK: con- + ject (throw) → throwing pieces together into a guess

allay *v.*

“The Kremlin urged citizens to trust the health agency's statements, hoping to allay public fear.”

Meaning: to diminish or put at rest a fear, suspicion or worry

Syn: assuage · **Ant:** intensify

HOOK: allay = lay to rest

nascent *adj.*

“Swift isolation of contacts is meant to contain a nascent outbreak before it can take hold.”

Meaning: just coming into existence and beginning to develop

Syn: emerging · **Ant:** mature

HOOK: nasci (to be born) → being born

alacrity *n.*

“Health officers traced and monitored the worker's contacts with alacrity, before any of them showed symptoms.”

Meaning: brisk and cheerful readiness

Syn: promptness · **Ant:** reluctance

HOOK: alacer (lively) → lively readiness to act

probity *n.*

“Public trust in a health agency rests on the probity of its statements, not merely on their speed.”

Meaning: the quality of having strong moral principles; honesty and integrity

Syn: integrity · **Ant:** dishonesty

HOOK: probus (upright) → the quality of being upright

efficacious *adj.*

“Antibiotics are highly efficacious against plague when treatment begins within a day of the first symptoms.”

Meaning: successful in producing the desired result; effective

Syn: effective · **Ant:** ineffective

HOOK: efficacy = power to produce effect; efficacious = having it

unsubstantiated *adj.*

“A reading passage may ask you to separate an unsubstantiated claim from a fact an authority has confirmed.”

Meaning: not supported or proven by evidence

Syn: unproven · **Ant:** verified

HOOK: un- + substance → a claim with no substance behind it

provenance *n.*

“Before repeating a viral report, a careful reader checks its provenance: who first said it, and on what evidence.”

Meaning: the place of origin or earliest known history of something

Syn: origin · **Ant:** destination

HOOK: provenir (to come forth) → where a thing comes from

forestall *v.*

“Placing about 200 people under observation was a step to forestall any spread, not proof that one had occurred.”

Meaning: to prevent or obstruct something by acting ahead of time

Syn: pre-empt · **Ant:** facilitate

HOOK: fore- (before) + stall (block) → block it before it arrives

CONFUSABLE PAIRS — DON'T MIX THESE UP

epidemic *vs* **endemic**

epidemic: a sudden, widespread outbreak of disease in a community

endemic: regularly present within a particular region or people

TIP: EPIdemic = upon (epi) the people suddenly; ENdemic = IN (en) the place always.

ensure *vs* **insure**

ensure: to make certain that something happens

insure: to protect against loss by an insurance policy

TIP: Ensure = make surE; Insure = buy Insurance.

contagious *vs* **contiguous**

contagious: spread by direct or close contact

contiguous: sharing a common border; touching

TIP: contaGIOUS spreads by contact; contiGIOUS states are joined at the border.

septic *vs* **sceptic**

septic: infected with harmful bacteria

sceptic: a person inclined to doubt accepted claims

TIP: Septic links to septicæmia (blood infection); a sCepic Casts doubt.

emigrate *vs* **immigrate**

emigrate: to leave one's own country to settle elsewhere

immigrate: to come into a foreign country to settle there

TIP: E-migrate = Exit; Im-migrate = come In.

IDIOMS & ONE-WORD SUBSTITUTION



Idioms in context

- **a clean bill of health** — an official declaration that a person or thing is healthy or in good condition
“The biosafety commission effectively gave the institute a clean bill of health, finding no accident in its handling of pathogens.”
- **to err on the side of caution** — to choose the safer course, even at some cost, when unsure
“Authorities erred on the side of caution and placed the worker's contacts under medical observation.”
- **to nip in the bud** — to stop something at an early stage before it develops
“Treating plague within twenty-four hours nips the infection in the bud.”
- **to fan the flames** — to make a bad situation, or strong feelings, worse
“Unverified posts on Telegram channels only fanned the flames of public anxiety.”

One-word substitution

- a disease prevalent over a whole country or over the world → **pandemic**
- a disease regularly found among people of a particular region → **endemic**
- a period of isolation imposed to prevent the spread of disease → **quarantine**
- the study of the causes of disease → **aetiology (etiology)**
- a medicine or measure intended to prevent disease → **prophylactic**

WORDS IN THE WILD — FROM TODAY'S NEWSPAPER

- **invoked** — cited or put into effect a law or authority as the basis for action
“The same law was invoked for COVID-19: on 11 March 2020 the Cabinet Secretary asked all States and Union Territories to invoke Section 2.” — CLAT Gurukul explainer (Irkutsk plague claim), 6 Oct 2026
- **notifiable** — required by law or regulation to be officially reported to an authority
“It is not automatically notifiable.” — CLAT Gurukul explainer (Irkutsk plague claim), 6 Oct 2026
- **undetermined** — not yet established or decided
“Russia's health agency calls the illness a pneumonia of undetermined cause, and the World Health Organization (WHO) says no cause of death has been officially confirmed and that the risk to the general public appears to be low.” — CLAT Gurukul explainer (Irkutsk plague claim), 6 Oct 2026
- **surveillance** — close, systematic observation, especially to detect a threat early
“India's Plague Surveillance Unit in Bengaluru was set up in 1975 under what is now the National Centre for Disease Control.” — CLAT Gurukul explainer (Irkutsk plague claim), 6 Oct 2026

LEGAL & LATIN TERMS EVERY ASPIRANT MUST KNOW

- **salus populi suprema lex** — the welfare of the people is the supreme law
- **sub judice** — under judicial consideration; pending before a court and so not to be publicly prejudged
- **ipso facto** — by that very fact or act
- **inter alia** — among other things
- **de jure** — by right; according to law
- **de novo** — anew; from the beginning, as in a fresh hearing
- **ex parte** — on behalf of, or in the presence of, one party only
- **in rem** — against a thing; a right or judgment binding the whole world
- **sine qua non** — an essential condition; something without which the matter cannot exist
- **bona fide** — in good faith; genuine, without intent to deceive
- **mala fide** — in bad faith; with intent to deceive
- **onus probandi** — the burden of proof
- **pendente lite** — while the litigation is pending

RECALL CHECK — WORDS FROM EARLIER

assiduous (learnt 7 days ago) — meaning: _____

PRACTICE DRILL

1. 'Obsequious' most nearly means:
A) arrogantly defiant · B) carefully cautious · C) excessively eager to please · D) fair and impartial
2. A conclusion that does not logically follow from what precedes it is called a:
A) non sequitur · B) consequence · C) sequel · D) prosecution
3. The maxim 'salus populi suprema lex' means:
A) a matter pending before a court · B) by that very fact · C) on the first appearance · D) the welfare of the people is the supreme law
4. Choose the best fit: The health agency's statement was meant to _____ public fears about the death.
A) aggravate · B) allay · C) proscribe · D) conjecture
5. Choose the best fit: An event involving pneumonic plague is not automatically _____; it must first be assessed under the IHR.
A) invoked · B) notifiable · C) undetermined · D) endemic
6. 'Probity' most nearly means:
A) swiftness in acting · B) a guess on little evidence · C) the origin of a thing · D) strict honesty and integrity
7. A disease regularly found among the people of a particular region is:
A) endemic · B) epidemic · C) pandemic · D) septic
8. To 'proscribe' a practice is to:
A) recommend it · B) record it · C) forbid it by law · D) postpone it

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

ETYMOLOGY TRAIL

The Latin verb **sequi**, 'to follow', runs through the language of cause and effect. Every act has a **consequence** that follows from it, and every rumour a **subsequent** correction that trails behind. A careful reader will not be **obsequious** towards a viral claim, because a **non sequitur** — a conclusion does not follow — turns mere **conjecture** into apparent fact. Only evidence of sound **provenance** lets the State **prosecute** a wrong or **forestall** a real outbreak.

