

ROOT OF THE DAY

scrib / script — *Latin scribere (past participle scriptus) — to write · “write”*

ascribe — a(d)- (to) + scribe (write) = to write something down to someone; to attribute a cause, quality or work to a source

prescribe — pre- (before) + scribe (write) = to write down beforehand; to lay down a rule, penalty or course of action with authority

conscript — con- (together) + script (written) = written into the list together; to enlist compulsorily into service

inscribe — in- (on, into) + scribe (write) = to write on; to carve or mark words permanently on a surface or in a record

transcribe — trans- (across) + scribe (write) = to write across from one form to another; to put speech or notes into written copy

nondescript — non- (not) + descript (described, written down) = not worth describing; lacking distinctive features

POWER WORDS

affront *n.*

“The ICC described the US decision to place the Court itself on the sanctions list as an affront to the rule of law and the international legal order.”

Meaning: an action or remark that causes outrage or open offence

Syn: insult · **Ant:** compliment

HOOK: Latin ad frontem (to the face) → an insult thrown straight in someone's face

flagrant *adj.*

“Navi Pillay's career was spent ensuring that flagrant crimes such as genocide and crimes against humanity did not go unpunished.”

Meaning: conspicuously and shockingly obvious, especially of a wrong or offence

Syn: blatant · **Ant:** concealed

HOOK: flagrare (to blaze) → a wrong that burns in plain sight

spurious *adj.*

“Biometric authentication at examination centres is meant to stop spurious candidates from sitting a paper in another person's name.”

Meaning: false or fake; not genuine, though appearing to be so

Syn: counterfeit · **Ant:** authentic

HOOK: spurius (illegitimate) → something born of a false claim

indefatigable *adj.*

“An indefatigable advocate, Pillay defended opponents of apartheid long before she sat as an international judge.”

Meaning: persisting tirelessly; incapable of being worn out

Syn: tireless · **Ant:** lethargic

HOOK: in- (not) + de- + fatigare (to tire) → one who simply cannot be tired out

untrammelled *adj.*

“The RBI does not allow the rupee untrammelled movement; it intervenes when volatility becomes excessive, without targeting a fixed level.”

Meaning: not deprived of freedom of action; unrestricted

Syn: unrestrained · **Ant:** constrained

HOOK: trammel (a net or shackle for a horse) + un- → running free of every net

pervasive *adj.*

“Child marriage remains pervasive in parts of the world, with more than 12 million girls married before adulthood every year.”

Meaning: spreading widely through an area or group; present everywhere

Syn: widespread · **Ant:** rare

HOOK: per- (through) + vadere (to go) → going right through every part

hegemony *n.*

“Critics argue that sanctioning an international court reflects a great power's hegemony over institutions it has never agreed to join.”

Meaning: dominance or leadership of one state or group over others

Syn: supremacy · **Ant:** subordination

HOOK: Greek hegemon (leader) → the one who leads and expects the rest to follow

precarious *adj.*

“With crude prices rising, the rupee was in a precarious position until the RBI opened a special dollar window for the three public sector oil companies.”

Meaning: dangerously uncertain or insecure; likely to give way

Syn: unstable · **Ant:** secure

HOOK: precari- (obtained by prayer) → held only at another's mercy, so it may be lost at any moment

vindicate *v.*

“For many human-rights lawyers, the 2026 Peace Prize seemed to vindicate a lifetime of insisting that peace requires justice.”

Meaning: to show that someone or something is right or justified, especially after doubt or criticism

Syn: justify · **Ant:** discredit

HOOK: vindex (a defender, a claimant) → standing up to prove a claim was sound all along

remonstrate *v.*

“Several member states were expected to remonstrate with Washington, urging it to reverse a designation that targets the Court as an institution.”

Meaning: to make a forcefully reproachful protest; to argue in objection

Syn: protest · **Ant:** acquiesce

HOOK: re- (again) + monstrare (to show) → showing someone, again and again, that they are wrong

exorbitant *adj.*

“Attacks on Russian refineries pushed diesel to exorbitant prices worldwide, prompting a temporary US licence for Russian-origin diesel.”

Meaning: unreasonably high, especially of a price or demand

Syn: excessive · **Ant:** moderate

HOOK: ex- (out of) + orbita (track) → wandering far off the normal track

punctilious *adj.*

“A national testing agency must be punctilious about question-paper security, since a single leak can unsettle lakhs of candidates.”

Meaning: showing great attention to detail or correct procedure

Syn: meticulous · **Ant:** careless

HOOK: punctum (a point) → attentive to every last point

CONFUSABLE PAIRS — DON'T MIX THESE UP

ordinance *vs* **ordnance**

ordinance: an authoritative order; in India, a law promulgated by the President or a Governor

ordnance: military weapons, ammunition and equipment

TIP: An ordINance comes from INside government; ordnance (no i) is what the army fires.

illegible *vs* **ineligible**

illegible: not clear enough to be read

ineligible: not qualified or entitled to be chosen or to take part

TIP: iLEGible fails the reader (legere, to read); inELIGIBLE fails the rules of selection.

climatic *vs* **climactic**

climatic: relating to climate

climactic: forming the climax or high point of something

TIP: The extra C in climaCtic marks the Crisis point of a story.

prosecute *vs* **persecute**

prosecute: to institute legal proceedings against someone for a crime

persecute: to harass or ill-treat someone, especially for their beliefs or identity

TIP: PROsecute = PROceed in court; PERsecute = PERsistent cruelty.

imprudent *vs* **impudent**

imprudent: unwise; acting without care for the consequences

impudent: shamelessly rude or disrespectful

TIP: imPRUDENT lacks prudence (judgement); impudent lacks manners — no R, no respect.

IDIOMS & ONE-WORD SUBSTITUTION

Idioms in context

- **a shot across the bows** — a warning action meant to show that stronger measures may follow

One-word substitution

- a scientist who studies earthquakes and the waves they produce → **seismologist**



"Earlier sanctions on individual ICC judges were a shot across the bows; designating the Court itself is the full broadside."

- **to stand one's ground** — to refuse to yield or retreat when under pressure
"Declaring that it would not be deterred, the ICC chose to stand its ground and called on its member states for support."
- **to drag one's feet** — to act deliberately slowly or reluctantly
"A victim whose case has lingered for years is entitled to ask why the trial seems to drag its feet."
- **to leave no stone unturned** — to try every possible course of action to achieve something
"The parliamentary panel urged the NTA to leave no stone unturned in securing entrance examinations against leaks and impersonation."

- occurring or awarded after the death of the person concerned → **posthumous**
- a soldier who fights for any country or group in return for payment → **mercenary**
- a person who dislikes, despises or is prejudiced against women → **misogynist**
- a person who draws or produces maps → **cartographer**

WORDS IN THE WILD — FROM TODAY'S NEWSPAPER

- **frivolous** — lacking any serious purpose or legal merit; trivial
"The Court set aside a Delhi High Court order that had dismissed the complainant's plea as frivolous and imposed costs of ₹10,000 on her." — CLAT Gurukul daily brief (victim's right to a speedy trial), 11 Oct 2026
- **expeditious** — done with speed and efficiency
"She returned to the High Court under Section 528 BNSS, seeking directions for expeditious disposal." — CLAT Gurukul daily brief (victim's right to a speedy trial), 11 Oct 2026
- **voidable** — valid until set aside, but capable of being annulled at the option of one party
"Under Section 3, a child marriage is voidable at the option of the party who was a child, by a petition that may be filed up to two years after attaining majority." — CLAT Gurukul daily brief (International Day of the Girl Child), 11 Oct 2026
- **inadmissible** — not allowed to be heard or considered; not accepted as valid
"Under the principle of complementarity, a case is inadmissible if a State with jurisdiction is genuinely investigating or prosecuting it; the Court steps in only where national systems are unwilling or unable to do so." — CLAT Gurukul daily brief (US sanctions on the ICC), 11 Oct 2026

LEGAL & LATIN TERMS EVERY ASPIRANT MUST KNOW

- **aut dedere aut judicare** — either extradite or prosecute; a State must surrender an accused or try the case itself
- **erga omnes** — towards all; obligations owed to the international community as a whole
- **jus ad bellum** — the law governing when a State may lawfully resort to armed force
- **jus in bello** — the law governing conduct during armed conflict; international humanitarian law
- **rebus sic stantibus** — things standing thus; a treaty may lapse if circumstances change fundamentally
- **terra nullius** — land belonging to no one, open to acquisition by occupation
- **parens patriae** — parent of the nation; the State's power to protect those who cannot protect themselves, such as children
- **dominus litis** — master of the suit; the party who controls the conduct of a case
- **autrefois acquit** — formerly acquitted; a plea that the accused has already been acquitted of the same offence
- **in flagrante delicto** — in the very act of committing the offence; caught red-handed
- **subpoena** — 'under penalty'; a writ ordering a person to attend court, on pain of punishment
- **dies non** — a day on which no legal business is transacted

RECALL CHECK — WORDS FROM EARLIER

sovereignty (learnt 7 days ago) — meaning: _____

obviate (learnt 21 days ago) — meaning: _____

PRACTICE DRILL

1. 'Ascribe' most nearly means:
A) to attribute to a cause or source · B) to enlist compulsorily into service · C) to copy speech into written form · D) to lay down a rule with authority
2. Choose the best fit: The High Court had dismissed the complainant's plea as _____ and imposed costs on her.
A) expeditious · B) voidable · C) frivolous · D) punctilious
3. 'Spurious' most nearly means:
A) spreading widely everywhere · B) false though appearing genuine · C) unreasonably high in price · D) dangerously insecure
4. The State must _____ those who _____ citizens for their faith.
A) persecute ... prosecute · B) persecute ... persecute · C) prosecute ... persecute · D) prosecute ... persecute
5. When a court acts as 'parens patriae', it acts:
A) as master of the conduct of the suit · B) on a day when no business is done · C) after a prior acquittal of the accused · D) to protect those unable to protect themselves
6. A scientist who studies earthquakes is a/an:
A) seismologist · B) cartographer · C) geologist · D) meteorologist
7. 'Indefatigable' most nearly means:
A) shamelessly rude · B) obviously wrong · C) tireless and persistent · D) careful about detail
8. Choose the best fit: Under Section 3 of the PCMA, a child marriage is _____ at the option of the party who was a child.
A) inadmissible · B) voidable · C) frivolous · D) untrammelled

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

ETYMOLOGY TRAIL

The Latin **scribere**, 'to write', runs through the day's news: Washington chose to **inscribe** the ICC itself on its sanctions list, an **affront** the Court refused to accept as it stood its ground. In Oslo, the Peace Prize seemed to **vindicate** Navi Pillay, an **indefatigable** jurist who never let **flagrant** crimes go unpunished. At home, the Supreme Court held that a victim's plea for an **expeditious** trial is not **frivolous**, while the law already treats a child marriage as **voidable** — rules that statutes **prescribe** but communities must still honour.

