

ROOT OF THE DAY

jus / jur — Latin *jus, juris* — right, law · “law”

judicial — jur (law) + -ical (pertaining to) = pertaining to the law and legal proceedings

jurisdiction — jur (law) + dicere (to speak) = the authority to ‘speak the law’ in a territory

jurisprudence — juris (of law) + prudentia (wisdom) = the science and philosophy of law

perjure — per- (thoroughly, wrongly) + jurare (to swear) = to swear falsely; to lie under oath

abjure — ab- (away) + jurare (to swear) = to swear away; to renounce or give up formally

adjure — ad- (to) + jurare (to swear) = to command or solemnly urge someone under oath

POWER WORDS

expedient *adj./n.*

“The government’s decision to defer the pulses import duty was politically expedient, but critics warned it would dampen domestic cultivation incentives.”

Meaning: convenient and practical, though sometimes morally questionable; a means of achieving a particular end

Syn: pragmatic · **Ant:** principled

HOOK: ex- (out) + pedire (foot, from pes): something that frees your feet to move — convenient for the moment

restitution *n.*

“The court ordered restitution of the amount siphoned out of the joint venture account, holding that unjust enrichment cannot stand.”

Meaning: the restoration of something lost or taken; a legal remedy requiring a party to return a benefit wrongly obtained

Syn: reparation · **Ant:** forfeiture

HOOK: re- (back) + statuere (to set up) = setting things back as they were

supine *adj.*

“The bench criticised the regulator’s supine response to the industry’s non-compliance, noting that 30% of units had evaded Namami Gange orders for years.”

Meaning: failing to act through moral weakness or indolence; physically: lying face upward

Syn: passive · **Ant:** proactive

HOOK: supinus (lying on one’s back) = flat on your back, not rising to act

lacuna *n.*

“The bench noted a lacuna in the Arbitration and Conciliation Act on the question of multi-tier clauses, and called on Parliament to address it.”

Meaning: a gap or missing portion, especially in a legal text, manuscript or argument

Syn: gap · **Ant:** completeness

HOOK: lacus (lake/pit) = a hollow or empty space — like a pothole in the law

comity *n.*

“The Supreme Court observed that principles of comity required the Bombay High Court to defer to the Delhi High Court’s earlier ruling on the same question.”

Meaning: courtesy and mutual respect between courts, states or nations, especially in recognising each other’s acts and decisions

Syn: deference · **Ant:** disregard

HOOK: comitas (courtesy) = courts being courteous to one another; sounds like ‘committee behaving nicely’

proscribe *v.*

“The court found that the arbitration agreement did not proscribe parties from seeking interim relief from courts at the venue city.”

Meaning: to officially forbid something; to condemn or prohibit by authority

Syn: prohibit · **Ant:** sanction

HOOK: pro- (publicly) + scribere (to write) = to write someone’s name out publicly as outlawed — the opposite of prescribe

repugnant *adj.*

“Any state law that is repugnant to a central law on the same subject in the Concurrent List is void to the extent of that repugnancy.”

Meaning: causing strong disgust or revulsion; in law, inconsistent with or contrary to something

Syn: incompatible · **Ant:** consonant

HOOK: re- + pugnare (to fight) = fighting back against something, unable to co-exist with it

inviolable *adj.*

“The right to life under Article 21 is treated as inviolable — not even a lawful conviction permits the state to extinguish it arbitrarily.”

Meaning: never to be broken, infringed or dishonoured; too important to be interfered with

Syn: sacrosanct · **Ant:** vulnerable

HOOK: in- (not) + violare (to violate) = that which cannot be violated

exigency *n.*

“The court invoked the exigency of the situation to dispense with the customary fourteen-day notice before granting the interim order.”

Meaning: an urgent need or pressing demand; a critical situation requiring immediate action

Syn: urgency · **Ant:** leisure

HOOK: exigere (to drive out, to demand) = a situation that drives you to act at once

impugn *v.*

“The appellant sought to impugn the arbitral award on the ground that the arbitrator had failed to disclose a prior relationship with the respondent.”

Meaning: to dispute the truth, validity or honesty of something; to call into question

Syn: challenge · **Ant:** uphold

HOOK: im- (against) + pugnare (to fight) = to fight against the truth of a claim

CONFUSABLE PAIRS — DON’T MIX THESE UP

proscribe *vs* **prescribe**

proscribe: to officially forbid or prohibit something

prescribe: to recommend or authorise something, especially as a rule or a medicine

TIP: proSCRIBE writes someone out (bans them); preSCRIBE writes something in (authorises it). PRO-= forward/outlaw; PRE-= before/in advance.

eminent *vs* **imminent**

eminent: famous and respected within a particular sphere; also: projecting or sticking out above others

imminent: about to happen very soon; impending

TIP: EMinEnt = E for Excellence (the eminent judge); iMMiNent = iMMediate/iMpeNding threat. The eminent judge warned of imminent contempt.

restitution *vs* **retribution**

restitution: the restoration of something lost; returning a benefit wrongly obtained

retribution: punishment inflicted as vengeance for a wrong done; deserved payback

TIP: reSTITUtion = STITCh things back together (restore); reTRIBUtion = TRIBAl vengeance (punish). Courts award restitution to victims and impose retribution on wrongdoers.

illicit *vs* **elicit**

illicit: not permitted by law or custom; unlawful

elicit: to draw out a response, answer or reaction from someone

TIP: iLLicit = iLLegal; eLicit = to draw ELEment out. When police question a suspect, they elicit information about illicit activity.

principal *vs* **principle**

principal: the most important person, sum or thing; the head of a school or party to a legal transaction

principle: a fundamental truth, rule or moral standard

TIP: principAL ends in AL like pAL — your principal (head) is your pal; principlE ends in E like ruleE.

IDIOMS & ONE-WORD SUBSTITUTION

Idioms in context

- **to hold one’s ground** — to maintain one’s position firmly under pressure without giving way

“Despite mounting inflation concerns, the Reserve Bank held its ground on the rate, insisting that durable disinflation had not yet set in.”

One-word substitution

- a person who gives sworn written evidence in a legal proceeding, as in oral testimony → **deponent**



- **a litmus test** — a decisive test that reveals the true nature or quality of something
"The Supreme Court's approach to multi-tier arbitration clauses will serve as a litmus test for how Indian courts balance party autonomy and judicial oversight."
- **to read between the lines** — to look for a hidden or implied meaning that is not stated directly
"Reading between the lines of the Ministry's press release, analysts concluded that the pulses import decision was aimed at cooling food inflation ahead of state elections."
- **to throw down the gauntlet** — to issue a challenge or provoke a confrontation
"By filing a writ directly in the Supreme Court, the consortium threw down the gauntlet to the arbitral panel, forcing a ruling on whether courts could intervene at this stage."

- the crime of wilfully giving false evidence while under oath in a judicial proceeding → **perjury**
- a government's pardon of a large group of individuals, especially for a political offence → **amnesty**
- a person who is appointed by a court to manage the property of someone who is incapable of doing so → **curator**
- a formal declaration made instead of an oath by a person who objects to taking an oath → **affirmation**

WORDS IN THE WILD — FROM TODAY'S NEWSPAPER

- **microfoundations** — the analysis of macroeconomic phenomena (such as inflation or unemployment) by modelling the behaviour of individual households and firms from first principles
"Hall and Woodford were awarded the Nobel for building the microfoundations of macroeconomic stabilisation, showing how rational consumers and monopolistically competitive firms shape the aggregate economy." — CLAT Gurukul daily brief (Economics Nobel 2026), 13 Oct 2026
- **effluent** — liquid waste or sewage discharged from an industrial process into a river, lake or sea
"The National Mission for Clean Ganga found that grossly polluting industries upstream of Haridwar were still releasing untreated effluent directly into the river, violating consent-to-operate conditions." — CLAT Gurukul daily brief (Namami Gange compliance), 13 Oct 2026
- **légion d'honneur** — France's highest order of merit, awarded by the French Republic to individuals for outstanding service to France or to humanity; receiving it as a foreign national requires the President of India's prior approval under Article 18
"Sunil Bharti Mittal became the first Indian telecom entrepreneur to receive the Légion d'honneur, a recognition France reserves for exceptional contributions to its national or global interests." — CLAT Gurukul daily brief (Sunil Bharti Mittal honour), 13 Oct 2026
- **multilingual** — able to use or expressed in several languages; in technology, capable of processing multiple languages simultaneously
"Bhashini Shrutlekh, India's multilingual AI speech-to-text tool, was demonstrated at the ITEC Day event as a means of extending digital governance services to speakers of over twenty Indian languages." — CLAT Gurukul daily brief (Bhashini Shrutlekh), 13 Oct 2026

LEGAL & LATIN TERMS EVERY ASPIRANT MUST KNOW

- **in loco parentis** — in the place of a parent; the legal responsibility of an institution (e.g., school) to act as a parent toward those in its care
- **jus in personam** — a right against a specific person; a right enforceable only against a named individual, not the world at large
- **jus in rem** — a right in a thing; a right enforceable against everyone, such as a property right or a right arising from ownership
- **jus cogens** — a peremptory norm of international law from which no derogation is permitted, e.g., the prohibition on genocide or torture
- **actus reus** — the guilty act; the physical element of a crime that must be proved along with the mental element (mens rea)
- **mens rea** — the guilty mind; the mental intention or knowledge required for a crime to be committed
- **amicus curiae** — a friend of the court; a person or organisation not party to a case who assists the court by offering information or expertise
- **inter alia** — among other things; used to indicate that a list is not exhaustive
- **mutatis mutandis** — with the necessary changes having been made; used when applying a rule to a new but similar situation
- **obiter dictum** — a remark said 'by the way'; a judge's observation not essential to the decision and therefore not binding as precedent
- **ratio decidendi** — the reason for the decision; the binding legal principle on which a judgment rests
- **nemo judex in causa sua** — no one should be a judge in their own cause; the rule against bias — a cornerstone of natural justice

PRACTICE DRILL

1. 'Impugn' most nearly means:
 A) to formally forbid · B) to call into question · C) to restore something lost · D) to draw out a response
2. Choose the best fit: The bench criticised the regulator's _____ inaction, noting that it had done nothing for three years despite repeated orders.
 A) inviolable · B) supine · C) expedient · D) repugnant
3. 'Lacuna' most nearly means:
 A) an urgent demand · B) a hidden meaning · C) a gap or missing portion · D) a challenge issued formally
4. The officer admitted that the substance was _____ obtained and refused to _____ any information about its source under questioning.
 A) illicitly ... elicit · B) elicitly ... illicit · C) illicitly ... illicit · D) elicitly ... elicit
5. The binding legal principle on which a judgment rests is called:
 A) obiter dictum · B) amicus curiae · C) ratio decidendi · D) mutatis mutandis
6. A right enforceable against everyone — not just a named individual — is called:
 A) jus in personam · B) jus in rem · C) jus cogens · D) actus reus
7. Which sentence uses 'restitution' correctly?
 A) The court ordered restitution of the siphoned funds, requiring their return to the rightful owner. · B) The court ordered restitution against the accused, sentencing him to ten years in prison. · C) The court demanded restitution from the witness for giving false evidence. · D) The court's restitution was praised as an act of mercy toward the victims.
8. Which of the following pairs is a confusable?
 A) principal (head of institution) and principle (moral rule) · B) principal (head of institution) and principle (head of institution) · C) principal (moral rule) and principle (head of institution) · D) principal (financial sum) and principle (financial sum)

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

ETYMOLOGY TRAIL

The Latin root *jus*, law, gave us the day's spine: the Supreme Court examined whether a seat of arbitration was truly *juridical* — not a matter of *exigency* but of *comity* between courts — and found that any contractual term *repugnant* to the agreed governing law was void, leaving no *lacuna* in the parties' obligations. Where a statute is silent, courts do not rush to *impugn* the legislature's intent; they hold their ground, treating the *inviolable* boundary between judicial and legislative power as *sacrosanct*. Those who *perjure* themselves before such a court — swearing falsely on the very *jus* it upholds — risk both *retribution* and an order of *restitution*, reminding us that all three words trace back to the same Latin well of right and wrong.

