

## ROOT OF THE DAY

**TRANS-** — Latin: *trans-* (prefix) = across, through, beyond · “movement or passage from one side to another; going beyond a boundary”

**transit** — trans (across) + ire (to go) = to go across; a passage or journey through a place

**transgress** — trans (across) + gradi (to step) = to step across a boundary; to violate a rule or law

**transcend** — trans (beyond) + scandere (to climb) = to climb beyond; to surpass ordinary limits

**transmit** — trans (across) + mittere (to send) = to send across; to pass on information or signals

**transient** — trans (across) + ire (to go, going) = passing across quickly; lasting only a brief time

**transpire** — trans (through) + spirare (to breathe) = to breathe through; hence to become known or to happen (as news ‘leaks out’)

## POWER WORDS

**annul** v.

“The Karnataka High Court moved to annul the state ordinance that sought to raise SC/ST reservation above the 50% constitutional ceiling.”

**Meaning:** To declare officially void or invalid from the point of origin; to cancel something with legal authority

**Syn:** invalidate, void, nullify · **Ant:** ratify, uphold, affirm

**HOOK:** Think ‘annual ring’ removed from a tree — annul removes the record entirely, as if it never existed

**precedent** n.

“The Supreme Court’s ruling in *Indra Sawhney v. Union of India* set a binding precedent that no state government may exceed 50% reservation”

**Meaning:** An earlier event, decision, or legal case that serves as an example or rule to be followed in subsequent similar circumstances

**Syn:** model, benchmark, authority · **Ant:** anomaly, exception, departure

**HOOK:** Pre (before) + cedent (going) — something that went before and now guides what comes after

**bilateral** adj.

“The India-Russia *INDRA 2026* naval exercise at Vladivostok is a flagship bilateral engagement between the two countries’ maritime forces.”

**Meaning:** Involving two parties, countries, or sides; relating to both sides of an agreement or relationship

**Syn:** two-sided, mutual, reciprocal · **Ant:** unilateral, multilateral

**HOOK:** Bi (two) + lateral (side) — two sides together

**escalate** v.

“The Saudi-Houthi conflict escalated sharply when both sides struck energy infrastructure on the same day.”

**Meaning:** to increase in intensity or severity in a series of graduated steps

**Syn:** intensify · **Ant:** de-escalate

**HOOK:** scala (ladder in Latin) — each step up the ladder is one escalation

**disproportionate** adj.

“The court held that a 56% reservation was disproportionate and could not be justified without overturning the *Indra Sawhney* ceiling.”

**Meaning:** Too large or too small in relation to what is expected or appropriate; out of proper proportion

**Syn:** excessive, undue, inordinate · **Ant:** proportionate, balanced, commensurate

**HOOK:** Dis- (opposite) + proportion = opposite of being in the right proportion

**promulgate** v.

“The Governor of Karnataka promulgated an Ordinance on 23 October 2022 hiking quotas beyond the ceiling, which the High Court has now struck down.”

**Meaning:** To make a decree, law, or official decision publicly known; to put a law or ordinance into effect by formal proclamation

**Syn:** enact, proclaim, decree · **Ant:** repeal, abrogate, revoke

**HOOK:** Pro- (forward, publicly) + mulgare (to publish) — to push something publicly into existence

**arbitrary** adj.

“The High Court found the state’s decision to hike reservation beyond the constitutional ceiling was arbitrary and violated Article 14’s”

**Meaning:** Based on random choice or personal whim rather than reason or principle; in law, not founded on any rational basis

**Syn:** capricious, whimsical, unreasoned · **Ant:** reasoned, principled, judicious

**HOOK:** From arbiter (a judge who decides at will) — an arbitrary act is like a judge ruling on a coin flip

**eminent** adj.

“Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam is remembered as one of India’s most eminent scientists and a beloved President.”

**Meaning:** standing above others in quality, rank, or importance; distinguished

**Syn:** distinguished · **Ant:** obscure

**HOOK:** e- (out) + minere (to project) — someone who projects or stands out from the crowd

## CONFUSABLE PAIRS — DON’T MIX THESE UP

**promulgate** vs **abrogate**

**promulgate:** To officially make a new law or rule publicly known and put it into effect

**abrogate:** To formally repeal, cancel, or abolish an existing law or agreement

**TIP:** ProMULgate = Multiply into existence (create/announce); ABROgate = ABolish (remove). Karnataka promulgated the

**transient** vs **transcient**

**transient:** Lasting only a short time; passing quickly; temporary (correct spelling)

**transcient:** This spelling does NOT exist in English — ‘transcient’ is a common misspelling of ‘transient’

**TIP:** There is no ‘sc’ in transient. Remember: trans + ient (from ire = to go). One word, one ‘i’: tran-si-ent.

**bilateral** vs **bipartite**

**bilateral:** Involving two countries, parties, or groups in a diplomatic or political relationship (used for treaties, exercises, agreements)

**bipartite:** Divided into or shared between two distinct structural parts (used in law for agreements with two sections, or ecology for organisms)

**TIP:** Bilateral = two sides facing each other (diplomacy, international law).

Bipartite = split into two parts (structure).

**annul** vs **nullify**

**annul:** To declare something officially void from its very beginning, as if it never legally existed (used for marriages, court orders, ordinances)

**nullify:** To render something of no effect going forward; to counteract or cancel out a provision or argument

**TIP:** Annul = wipe the slate clean from the start (retrospective). Nullify = make it powerless from now on (prospective).

## IDIOMS & ONE-WORD SUBSTITUTION

**Idioms in context**

- **to cross the line** — To go beyond what is considered acceptable or legally permissible; to exceed a set boundary

“The Karnataka government crossed the line when it pushed reservation past 50%, a boundary the Supreme Court had drawn in *Indra Sawhney*.”

**One-word substitution**

- one who speaks or acts formally on behalf of another in legal proceedings → **advocate** / **proxy**
- a formal order issued by a head of state that has the force of law without parliamentary approval → **ordinance**



- **to hold one's ground** — To maintain one's position firmly under pressure, refusing to concede or back down  
"Iran continued to hold its ground in negotiations over the Strait of Hormuz, insisting that any transit-passage arrangement must respect"
- **to set a precedent** — To establish a pattern or rule through one's actions or decisions that will be followed in the future  
"By striking down Karnataka's reservation hike, the High Court set a precedent reminding state legislatures that constitutional ceilings are"
- **to draw a line in the sand** — to set a firm limit or boundary that one will not allow to be crossed  
"The Supreme Court, in upholding the 50% ceiling on reservations, effectively drew a line in the sand that no State legislature may cross"
- the crime of deliberately setting fire to property → **arson**
- one who is appointed by a court to manage the property or affairs of a person unable to do so → **guardian**
- a rule or regulation issued by a head of state with the force of law, without prior legislative approval → **ordinance**

## WORDS IN THE WILD — FROM TODAY'S NEWSPAPER

- **promulgated** — Made (a law or decree) publicly known; put into official effect by formal announcement  
"The Governor of Karnataka promulgated an Ordinance on 23 October 2022 that raised SC/ST reservation to 56%, a move the High Court" — *The Hindu / Indian Express*, 14-15 Oct 2026
- **indigenously** — Developed or produced entirely within a country using domestic resources and expertise  
"The indigenously built stealth frigate INS Sahyadri, commissioned under Project 17, participated in the INDRA 2026 naval exercise" — *PTI / Times of India*, 14-15 Oct 2026
- **escalated** — Increased rapidly in intensity or severity, moving to a more serious stage  
"The conflict in the Red Sea escalated further on Tuesday, 13 October 2026, when Houthis forces struck energy infrastructure linked" — *Reuters / Al Jazeera*, 14-15 Oct 2026
- **insufficient** — Not enough; failing to meet the required standard or expectation  
"Iran's foreign ministry stated that the United States' written reply on Strait of Hormuz transit-passage guarantees was" — *Reuters / IRNA*, 14-15 Oct 2026

## LEGAL & LATIN TERMS EVERY ASPIRANT MUST KNOW

- **prima facie** — At first sight; on the face of it. Refers to evidence or a case that is sufficient to establish a fact or conclusion
- **ultra vires** — Beyond the powers. An act that exceeds the legal authority of the person or body that performed it. The reservation
- **inter alia** — Among other things. Used when citing one or several items from a longer list without exhausting all examples.
- **ratio decidendi** — The reason for the decision. The legal principle or reasoning that forms the binding core of a court's judgment, as
- **obiter dicta** — Things said in passing (plural of obiter dictum). Judicial observations not essential to the decision and therefore not
- **locus standi** — The right or standing to bring an action before a court. A petitioner must demonstrate locus standi — a sufficient
- **res judicata** — A matter already judged. A final judgment on the merits by a competent court bars re-litigation of the same cause of
- **pacta sunt servanda** — Agreements must be kept. A foundational principle of international treaty law: once a state has ratified a treaty
- **ex parte** — on one side only; a court hearing conducted with only one party present without the other being notified
- **sub judice** — under judicial consideration; a matter currently being decided by a court and therefore not to be publicly discussed

## PRACTICE DRILL

- The Karnataka High Court struck down the ordinance because it was \_\_\_\_\_ — based on no rational classification and therefore violating Article 14.  
A) A. bilateral · B) B. transient · C) C. promulgated · D) D. arbitrary
- Which legal Latin term refers to the binding core principle of reasoning in a court's judgment?  
A) A. ratio decidendi · B) B. obiter dicta · C) C. res judicata · D) D. locus standi
- The INDRA 2026 naval exercise between India and Russia at Vladivostok is best described as a \_\_\_\_\_ engagement.  
A) A. multilateral · B) B. bilateral · C) C. bipartite · D) D. unilateral
- UNCLOS Article 38 codifies the right of transit passage. 'Codify' most nearly means:  
A) A. to challenge · B) B. to repeal · C) C. to arrange rules into a systematic body of law · D) D. to interpret loosely
- Which pair correctly distinguishes 'annul' from 'nullify'?  
A) A. annul = cancel prospectively; nullify = cancel retrospectively · B) B. annul = make ineffective going forward; nullify = wipe out entirely · C) C. annul = void from the beginning (retrospective); nullify = render of no effect (prospective) · D) D. Both words are synonyms with no meaningful legal distinction
- APJ Abdul Kalam was called the 'Missile Man of India' because India \_\_\_\_\_ developed its SLV-3 rocket under his leadership.  
A) A. indigenously · B) B. arbitrarily · C) C. bilaterally · D) D. transiently

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

## ETYMOLOGY TRAIL

Today's root TRANS- (Latin: across, beyond) runs like a thread through the day's news: the INS Sahyadri's **transit** through the Pacific under UNCLOS reminds us that **pacta sunt servanda** — treaty obligations states cannot **transgress** without acting **ultra vires** of their international commitments. When a state **promulgates** a law that crosses the constitutional ceiling — as Karnataka did with its **disproportionate** 56% reservation — the court will **annul** it, because **arbitrary** action can never **transcend** the principled scrutiny of judicial review. The word **transient** captures the fate of every such overreach: what is built without rational foundation is, by its nature, passing — and the **eminent** scientists and statesmen who **indigenously** built India's institutions understood that law, not power, is the only durable bridge in time.

