ROOT OF THE DAY

jur / jus — *Latin ius (genitive iuris) = law, right, justice · "Anything carrying this root relates to law, legal authority, or the administration of rights."*

jurisdiction — iuris + dictio (speaking) → the power to speak the law over a territory or matter
jurisprudence — iuris + prudentia (wisdom) → the science or philosophy of law
adjure — ad + iurare (to swear) → to command someone solemnly, as if under oath
abjure — ab (away) + iurare → to renounce or swear off something formally
perjury — per (through/wrongly) + iurare → to lie under oath, a violation of the sworn word
jury — from iurare → a body of persons sworn to deliver a verdict
injure — in (not) + ius → to violate someone's right; to cause harm
prejudice — prae (before) + iudicium (judgment) → a judgment formed before examining the facts

POWER WORDS

adjudicate *verb*
"The tribunal was convened to adjudicate the dispute between the two competing claimants over the mineral rights."
Meaning: To make a formal judgment or decision on a disputed matter, especially in a legal context.
Syn: arbitrate, rule, determine · **Ant:** defer, abstain
HOOK: Think of a judge (judex) sitting AD-judicating — moving toward a decision.

rescind *verb*
"The appellate court rescinded the earlier order, holding it to be without jurisdiction."
Meaning: To revoke, cancel, or repeal a law, order, or agreement.
Syn: revoke, annul, abrogate · **Ant:** ratify, uphold, affirm
HOOK: Re + scindere (to cut) → cut it away, undo it.

contentious *adjective*
"The reservation ceiling has long been a contentious issue, with multiple states challenging the 50 per cent cap."
Meaning: Causing or likely to cause disagreement or controversy; involving heated argument.
Syn: disputed, controversial, debatable · **Ant:** uncontroversial, settled, undisputed
HOOK: From Latin contentio (struggle). A contentious clause is one both sides fight over.

proscribe *verb*
"The organisation was proscribed under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act."
Meaning: To officially forbid something; to condemn or denounce as dangerous.
Syn: prohibit, ban, interdict · **Ant:** prescribe, permit, sanction
HOOK: Pro + scribere (to write in front of) → to write a name on the banned list.

malfeasance *noun*
"The inquiry committee was set up to investigate allegations of malfeasance by senior officials."
Meaning: Wrongdoing, especially by a public official; the commission of an unlawful act.
Syn: misconduct, wrongdoing, corruption · **Ant:** probity, integrity, rectitude
HOOK: Mal (bad) + faisance (doing) → doing a bad act while in a position of trust.

promulgate *verb*
"The President promulgated the ordinance when Parliament was not in session."
Meaning: To make a law or decree known publicly; to put a law into effect by official proclamation.
Syn: enact, proclaim, issue · **Ant:** repeal, rescind, annul
HOOK: From Latin promulgare — to make known widely. The President promulgates; Parliament enacts.

derogation *noun*
"Article 4 of the ECHR permits derogation from certain rights only in times of public emergency."
Meaning: The partial repeal or limiting of a law; a departure from a standard or right, often temporary.
Syn: curtailment, abridgement, limitation · **Ant:** observance, adherence, compliance
HOOK: De + rogare (to ask/propose) → to partially un-propose a rule.

egregious *adjective*
"The court found the conduct of the official to be egregious, warranting an exemplary penalty."
Meaning: Outstandingly bad; shockingly flagrant.
Syn: flagrant, glaring, atrocious · **Ant:** minor, trivial, excusable
HOOK: Latin ex grege (out of the flock) → so bad it stands apart from the herd.

acquiesce *verb*
"The minority shareholders acquiesced in the board's decision, choosing not to seek judicial remedy."
Meaning: To accept or comply without protest; to agree passively.
Syn: consent, concur, assent · **Ant:** object, protest, dissent
HOOK: Latin acquiescere (to rest in) → to rest in something without fighting it.

CONFUSABLE PAIRS — DON'T MIX THESE UP

mitigate *vs* militate
mitigate: To lessen the severity or seriousness of something. ('The court mitigated the sentence given his clean record.')
militate: To be a powerful factor working against something. ('His prior convictions militate against leniency.')
TIP: mitiGATE = to reduce. militate = to work against. Remember: militate has the same root as military — a force opposing.

biennial *vs* biannual
biennial: Occurring once every two years.
biannual: Occurring twice a year (same as semi-annual).
TIP: Biennial = bi + annual but EVERY two years. Biannual = twice a year. When in doubt, write 'every two years' or 'twice a year' for clarity.

preclude *vs* foreclose
preclude: To prevent something from happening; to make impossible in advance.
foreclose: To shut out or exclude; specifically in law, to deprive a mortgagor of the right to redeem property.
TIP: Preclude is general (prevent any outcome). Foreclose is specific: either ending a mortgage right or shutting off a course of action entirely and permanently.

rebut *vs* refute
rebut: To argue against a claim or present counter-evidence, without necessarily disproving it.
refute: To prove a claim to be false or incorrect; to disprove conclusively.
TIP: You can rebut without winning; you refute only when you actually disprove. Courts rebut; science refutes.

apprise *vs* appraise
apprise: To inform or notify someone of something. ('The officer apprised the court of new developments.')
appraise: To assess the value, quality, or nature of something. ('The expert appraised the property at ₹2 crore.')
TIP: apPRISE = give a PRIZE of information. apPRAISE = give PRAISE = evaluate. Different vowel, different meaning.

affect *vs* effect
affect: As a verb: to have an influence on. ('The ruling affected thousands of litigants.')
effect: As a noun: a result or consequence. ('The effect of the judgment was immediate.') Also a verb meaning to bring about formally. ('The parties effected a compromise.')
TIP: Affect is almost always the verb; Effect is almost always the noun. Excepti… a change' = to bring about a change (rare verb use of effect).

NAME: _____ ROLL NO: _____ BATCH: _____

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IDIOMS & ONE-WORD SUBSTITUTION

Idioms in context

- **in the dock** — Facing trial or serious accusation; under scrutiny for wrongdoing.
  "With evidence mounting, the former minister found himself in the dock before the special court."
- **turn a blind eye to** — To deliberately ignore something that one knows to be wrong or illegal.
  "The regulatory body was accused of turning a blind eye to the repeated violations by the corporation."
- **pass the buck** — To shift responsibility or blame to someone else.
  "Instead of addressing the constitutional question, the agency attempted to pass the buck to the state government."
- **read between the lines** — To find the hidden or implied meaning in something beyond the literal words.
  "A skilled lawyer must read between the lines of a contract to identify latent ambiguities that could give rise to future disputes."

One-word substitution

- one who is unable to pay debts → **insolvent**
- one who hates mankind → **misanthrope**
- one who studies the origin and history of words → **etymologist**
- one who advocates for the abolition of a law or practice → **abolitionist**
- one who makes a will → **testator**

WORDS IN THE WILD — FROM TODAY'S NEWSPAPER

- **bilateral** — Involving two parties or nations; undertaken jointly by two sides.
  "The bilateral naval exercise between India and Russia reinforced strategic ties between the two countries." — *India-Russia INDRA naval exercise reports, Oct 2026*
- **indigenous** — Produced or developed within a country; native rather than imported.
  "The indigenously built stealth frigate is a testament to India's growing defence manufacturing capability." — *APJ Abdul Kalam anniversary coverage, Oct 2026*
- **coalition** — A temporary alliance of distinct parties, groups, or nations for a common purpose.
  "The Saudi-led coalition escalated its response after Houthi forces targeted energy infrastructure." — *Saudi-Houthi escalation reports, Oct 2026*
- **ceasefire** — A temporary suspension of fighting; an agreement to stop hostilities for a defined period or purpose.
  "An energy ceasefire was proposed to protect civilian infrastructure during the Ukraine conflict." — *Ukraine energy ceasefire negotiations, Oct 2026*

LEGAL & LATIN TERMS EVERY ASPIRANT MUST KNOW

- **prima facie** — At first appearance; based on the first impression. A prima facie case is one that appears sufficient to proceed to trial.
- **mens rea** — Guilty mind; the criminal intent element of an offence. Without mens rea, most crimes cannot be established.
- **actus reus** — Guilty act; the physical act or conduct that constitutes a criminal offence.
- **res judicata** — A matter already judged; the principle that a matter decided by a court cannot be re-litigated between the same parties.
- **ratio decidendi** — The reason for the decision; the legal principle underlying a court's judgment, which creates binding precedent.
- **obiter dicta** — Things said by the way; observations in a judgment that are not essential to the decision and do not form binding precedent.
- **locus standi** — Place of standing; the right or capacity of a party to bring an action before a court.
- **ultra vires** — Beyond the powers; an act done in excess of one's legal authority is ultra vires and therefore void.
- **bona fide** — In good faith; genuine and without fraud or deceit. ('A bona fide purchaser for value.')
- **ex parte** — On one side only; a proceeding conducted in the absence of, and without notice to, the other party.
- **nemo judex in causa sua** — No one shall be a judge in their own cause; a foundational principle of natural justice prohibiting bias.
- **stare decisis** — To stand by what has been decided; the doctrine that courts should follow precedent established by earlier decisions.

PRACTICE DRILL

1. A court that proceeds to hear a matter without notifying the other party is conducting a proceeding that is best described as:
A) A. sub judice · B) B. ex parte · C) C. amicus curiae · D) D. inter alia

2. The government issued a notification proscribing the organisation under anti-terrorism law. The word 'proscribing' most nearly means:
A) A. recommending · B) B. officially banning · C) C. investigating · D) D. regulating

3. Which of the following pairs is correctly distinguished?
A) A. Biennial = twice a year; Biannual = every two years · B) B. Biennial = every two years; Biannual = twice a year · C) C. Both mean twice a year · D) D. Both mean every two years

4. The principle that no person shall be a judge in their own cause is captured by the Latin maxim:
A) A. res judicata · B) B. stare decisis · C) C. nemo judex in causa sua · D) D. sine qua non

5. 'The minister's prior convictions _____ any claim to leniency.' Which word correctly fills the blank?
A) A. mitigate · B) B. militate against · C) C. preclude against · D) D. acquiesce in

6. The Supreme Court's finding that certain provisions were struck down because they exceeded legislative authority is an example of the doctrine of:
A) A. bona fide · B) B. ratio decidendi · C) C. ultra vires · D) D. obiter dicta

7. The word 'acquiesce' is closest in meaning to:
A) A. protest vigorously · B) B. comply without objection · C) C. adjudicate formally · D) D. promulgate officially

8. In a judgment, the court noted in passing that the legislature should revisit the definition of public interest. This observation, not essential to the ruling, would be classified as:
A) A. ratio decidendi · B) B. locus standi · C) C. obiter dicta · D) D. mens rea

9. 'The bilateral agreement was signed after months of negotiations.' The word 'bilateral' indicates the agreement involved:
A) A. one party acting alone · B) B. multiple nations · C) C. two parties · D) D. an international tribunal

10. Which word means to formally revoke or cancel a law or order?
A) A. promulgate · B) B. adjudicate · C) C. rescind · D) D. proscribe

Answer key: 1-B · 2-B · 3-B · 4-C · 5-B · 6-C · 7-B · 8-C · 9-C · 10-C

ETYMOLOGY TRAIL

> *From the Latin ius — the abstract force of law and right — the Romans built an entire civilisation of words. When a state exercises jurisdiction, it is literally 'speaking the law' (iuris + dictio) within its territory; when a judge adjudicates, she moves toward (ad-) a decision grounded in that same ius. Jurisprudence is the wisdom (prudentia) o and those who commit perjury corrupt the sworn word at law's very heart. Even injury is a violation of ius — a negation of the right — reminding us that every legal w carrying 'jur' or 'jus' is a descendant of that single ancient syllable meaning what is right.*

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