ROOT OF THE DAY

jud/jur/jus — *Latin jus/juris — law, justice · "law, right, justice"*

jurisdiction — juris (law) + dictio (declaration) = declaration of law
jurisprudence — juris (law) + prudentia (wisdom) = wisdom of the law
adjudicate — ad- (to) + judicare (to judge) = to formally judge
injunction — in- (against) + jungere/jus (law) = a legal order against action
prejudice — pre- (before) + judicium (judgment) = judgment formed before evidence

POWER WORDS

adjudicate *v.*
"The National Company Law Tribunal is empowered to adjudicate disputes arising out of insolvency proceedings under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016."
Meaning: to make a formal judgment or decision on a disputed matter; to act as a judge
Syn: arbitrate, determine, pronounce · **Ant:** defer, evade, procrastinate
HOOK: ADJUDICATE = AD (to) + JUDGE + ATE — to go to a judge and eat up the dispute

abrogate *v.*
"Article 370 was abrogated by a Presidential Order in August 2019, thereby revoking the special status accorded to Jammu and Kashmir."
Meaning: to formally repeal or abolish a law, agreement, or right by an authoritative act
Syn: repeal, nullify, rescind · **Ant:** enact, ratify, promulgate
HOOK: ABROGATE = AB (away) + ROGUE: send the rogue law away — cancel it

impugn *v.*
"Senior counsel for the respondent sought to impugn the credibility of the prosecution witness by pointing to contradictions in the two statements recorded under Section 161 CrPC."
Meaning: to dispute or challenge the truth, validity, or integrity of something
Syn: challenge, dispute, rebut · **Ant:** endorse, uphold, corroborate
HOOK: IMPUGN = IM + PUGN (fist) — throw a fist at the evidence to knock it down

lacuna *n.*
"The Law Commission identified a significant lacuna in the existing legislation — no provision addressed the civil liability of social media intermediaries for user-generated defamatory content."
Meaning: a gap or missing portion, especially in a written work, law, or argument
Syn: gap, hiatus, void · **Ant:** completeness, fullness
HOOK: LACUNA = LAC (lake) + UNA: a lake-shaped hole — an empty hollow in the law

promulgate *v.*
"The Central Government promulgated the ordinance during the Parliament recess to immediately operationalise the amendment to the Citizenship Act."
Meaning: to make known publicly; to put a law or decree into effect by formal public announcement
Syn: enact, proclaim, disseminate · **Ant:** repeal, suppress, abrogate
HOOK: PROMULGATE = PROMOTE + GATE — open the gate to promote a law into effect

inchoate *adj.*
"The court held that the inchoate right of the plaintiff to the property had not yet crystallised into a vested legal title enforceable in law."
Meaning: just begun and not fully formed or developed; undeveloped, imperfect
Syn: nascent, embryonic, rudimentary · **Ant:** complete, mature, consummated
HOOK: INCHOATE = IN + COAT: a coat not yet fully sewn — unfinished, partial

inimical *adj.*
"The Supreme Court observed that regulations which are inimical to the right to trade and commerce must pass the test of proportionality under Article 19(6)."
Meaning: tending to obstruct or harm; hostile and unfavourable
Syn: adverse, hostile, detrimental · **Ant:** conducive, favourable, propitious
HOOK: INIMICAL = ENEMY + -ical: enemy-like in effect — working against you

cogent *adj.*
"The Division Bench found the reasoning of the learned Single Judge to be cogent and well-reasoned, declining to interfere with the findings on appeal."
Meaning: clear, logical, and convincing; compelling in force or expression
Syn: persuasive, compelling, forceful · **Ant:** vague, feeble, unconvincing
HOOK: COGENT = CO (together) + AGENT: all agents working together = a tight, compelling argument

CONFUSABLE PAIRS — DON'T MIX THESE UP

mitigate *vs* **militate**
mitigate: to lessen the severity or seriousness of something
militate: to be a powerful factor against something (always used with 'against')
TIP: MITIGATE = make mild. MILITATE = military force against — something militates AGAINST, never 'militate in favour of'. 'mitigate against' is a common error.

disinterested *vs* **uninterested**
disinterested: impartial; free from personal bias or self-interest
uninterested: not interested; indifferent or unconcerned
TIP: A judge must be DISINTERESTED (no stake in the outcome) but never UNINTERESTED (bored and not paying attention). Legal usage almost always requires 'disinterested'.

tortious *vs* **tortuous**
tortious: of or involving a tort; constituting a civil wrong that gives rise to liability
tortuous: full of twists and turns; excessively lengthy or complicated
TIP: TORTIOUS (like 'tort') = wrong in civil law. TORTUOUS (like 'torture') = twisted path. A tortious act can lead to a tortuous litigation.

prescribe *vs* **proscribe**
prescribe: to lay down rules; to recommend a course of action or treatment
proscribe: to officially forbid or prohibit
TIP: PRESCRIBE = PRE (before) + scribe: write the rules beforehand. PROSCRIBE = PRO (forward, publicly) + scribe: publicly write out a ban. A doctor prescribes; a law proscribes.

rebut *vs* **refute**
rebut: to argue against or contradict a claim without necessarily proving it false
refute: to prove conclusively that a claim is false
TIP: REBUT = counter with argument. REFUTE = prove wrong with evidence. A lawyer rebuts a claim in submission; a scientist refutes a hypothesis with data. 'I refute that!' spoken in anger is almost always wrong — 'rebut' is correct.

IDIOMS & ONE-WORD SUBSTITUTION

Idioms in context

- **on the face of it** — apparently; judging by the evidence available, without looking more deeply; prima facie
  "On the face of it, the contract appeared valid, but closer examination revealed that the consent had been obtained by misrepresentation."
- **at arm's length** — avoiding close contact or a relationship of undue influence, especially in business or legal dealings
  "The Supreme Court requires that transactions between related parties be conducted at arm's length to prevent conflict of interest and ensure fairness to minority shareholders."

One-word substitution

- one who cannot be bribed or corrupted → **incorruptible**
- a formal written statement confirmed under oath or affirmation → **affidavit**
- the withdrawal of a charge or accusation by the party who made it → **nolle prosequi**
- the state of being responsible in law for one's actions or omissions → **liability**
- a formal agreement between two or more parties that is legally en → **contract**

NAME: _____ ROLL NO: _____ BATCH: _____

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- **turn a blind eye** — to deliberately ignore or disregard something one knows to be wrong or improper
  "The tribunal held that the regulatory authority could not turn a blind eye to repeated violations simply because no formal complaint had been filed."
- **by the book** — strictly in accordance with the rules or the law; following every procedure exactly as prescribed
  "The inquiry officer insisted that the disciplinary proceedings be conducted entirely by the book, leaving no ground for a challenge on procedural impropriety."

WORDS IN THE WILD — FROM TODAY'S NEWSPAPER

- **vitiate** — to impair or make legally defective; to destroy the validity of something
  "The High Court held that the failure to supply documents to the accused before framing of charges would vitiate the entire trial, as it violated the right to a fair hearing." — Allahabad High Court, October 2026
- **laches** — unreasonable delay in asserting one's legal rights, which may result in the loss of the right to seek a remedy
  "The Supreme Court declined to grant relief on the ground of laches, observing that the petitioner had waited twelve years before approaching the court without any satisfactory explanation for the delay." — Supreme Court of India, October 2026
- **derogation** — the partial repeal or abolition of a law; a departure from a standard or right
  "The petitioner argued that the impugned notification was in derogation of the fundamental rights guaranteed under Part III of the Constitution and could not be saved by any reasonable restriction." — Economic Times Law, October 2026
- **abeyance** — a state of temporary suspension or inactivity; a state in which a right or position is not currently claimed
  "The matter was held in abeyance by the bench pending receipt of the report from the amicus curiae on the constitutional validity of the impugned provisions." — Bar and Bench, October 2026

LEGAL & LATIN TERMS EVERY ASPIRANT MUST KNOW

- **prima facie** — at first sight; based on the first impression; accepted as correct until proved otherwise — a prima facie case is one where the evidence, if believed, is sufficient to prove the fact in question.
- **ultra vires** — beyond the powers — an act is ultra vires when it exceeds the legal authority of the person or body performing it; the opposite is intra vires (within powers).
- **bona fide** — in good faith; genuine and sincere — a bona fide purchaser acquires property without notice of any prior claim and without any dishonest intent.
- **sub judice** — under judicial consideration and therefore prohibited from public discussion elsewhere — a matter is sub judice once it is before a court and until a final judgment is delivered.
- **locus standi** — the right or capacity to bring an action before a court — a petitioner must establish locus standi by showing sufficient interest in the matter; without it, the petition may be dismissed at the threshold.
- **ratio decidendi** — the reason for the decision — the legal rule or principle on which a court's decision is based; this part of a judgment is binding on lower courts under the doctrine of stare decisis.
- **obiter dictum** — a thing said by the way — a remark or observation made by a judge that is not essential to the decision; it is persuasive but not binding authority.
- **res judicata** — a matter already judged — the principle that a final judgment by a competent court on the merits of a case is conclusive and bars relitigation of the same issue between the same parties.
- **audi alteram partem** — hear the other side — a fundamental principle of natural justice requiring that no person may be condemned without being given an opportunity to present their case.
- **habeas corpus** — you shall have the body — a writ requiring a person under detention to be brought before a court so the legality of the detention may be examined; a cornerstone of personal liberty.

PRACTICE DRILL

1. A court issues an order restraining a party from taking a particular action pending the resolution of a dispute. This order is best described as —

A) A. a subpoena · B) B. an affidavit · C) C. an injunction · D) D. a deposition

2. The phrase 'the right is inchoate' in a legal judgment most likely means the right is —

A) A. fully crystallised and enforceable · B) B. not yet fully formed or vested · C) C. extinguished by lapse of time · D) D. inviolable and beyond challenge

3. Which of the following Latin maxims embodies the principle of natural justice that 'no person should be a judge in his own cause'?

A) A. audi alteram partem · B) B. res judicata · C) C. nemo judex in causa sua · D) D. obiter dictum

4. A lawyer tells the court that her client's unreasonable twelve-year delay in filing the suit should disentitle him to equitable relief. She is invoking the doctrine of —

A) A. res judicata · B) B. laches · C) C. sub judice · D) D. ultra vires

5. Choose the sentence in which 'militate' is used CORRECTLY —

A) A. The doctor administered drugs to militate the patient's pain. · B) B. The harsh weather conditions militate against the success of the expedition. · C) C. The judge asked counsel to militate the severity of his language. · D) D. Her calm disposition militated her anxiety before the examination.

6. The part of a judgment that constitutes binding precedent for lower courts is the —

A) A. obiter dictum · B) B. ex parte order · C) C. ratio decidendi · D) D. inter alia

7. A legislative provision that is struck down as 'ultra vires' has been found to be —

A) A. ambiguous in its language and requiring interpretation · B) B. beyond the competence or authority of the legislature that enacted it · C) C. in conformity with the Constitution and therefore valid · D) D. a matter pending before the court and not yet decided

8. Which word best fits the blank? 'The tribunal's findings were _____ — the reasoning was tight, the evidence marshalled with precision, and the conclusion impossible to dismiss.'

A) A. tendentious · B) B. circumspect · C) C. inchoate · D) D. cogent

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

ETYMOLOGY TRAIL

*From the Latin root **jus** (law, right), the Romans built **jurisdiction** — the declared power of a court to say what the law requires in a given territory. The same root gave us **adjudicate**: to bring a dispute before the seat of justice and formally decide it. A court exercising this power may issue an **injunction**, forbidding an act that would violate a right, or it may find that a piece of legislation is **ultra vires** — beyond the powers of the authority that enacted it, and therefore void from the start. When counsel seeks to **impugn** the opposing evidence, she is throwing a legal fist (from Latin *pugnus*) at the very gate of justice, demanding th the **cogent** survive.*

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