ROOT OF THE DAY

dict / dic — *Latin dicere (supine dictum) — to say, speak, declare · "say"*

edict — e- (out) + dict (say) = a command spoken out by authority
verdict — ver (true) + dict (say) = a true saying; the formal decision of a jury or court
contradict — contra- (against) + dict (say) = say the opposite of
predict — pre- (before) + dict (say) = say before it happens
indict — in- (against) + dict (say) = formally charge with an offence
jurisdiction — juris (law) + dict (say) = the power to say the law
dictum — dict (say) = a formal statement, especially a judge's remark

POWER WORDS

tenable *adj.*
"A claim that rests only on rumour is not tenable before a court that demands proof."
Meaning: able to be defended or maintained against attack or objection
Syn: defensible, sound, justifiable · **Ant:** untenable, indefensible
HOOK: TEN (hold) — an argument you can hold on to

contentious *adj.*
"The bill's retrospective clause proved contentious and was sent to a select committee."
Meaning: causing or likely to cause disagreement and argument
Syn: controversial, disputed, divisive · **Ant:** uncontroversial, agreed
HOOK: CONTEND — a topic everyone wants to contend over

apposite *adj.*
"The judge quoted an apposite precedent that settled the point in a single paragraph."
Meaning: highly appropriate and relevant to the matter at hand
Syn: pertinent, relevant, fitting · **Ant:** irrelevant, inapt
HOOK: AP + POSITE (placed) — placed right next to the point

tantamount *adj.*
"Refusing to decide a mercy petition for years is tantamount to denying it."
Meaning: equivalent in seriousness or effect to something worse
Syn: equivalent, akin, as good as · **Ant:** dissimilar, unlike
HOOK: TANT (so much) + AMOUNT — amounts to as much

ambivalent *adj.*
"The Court remained ambivalent about expanding the doctrine, approving its aim but doubting its reach."
Meaning: having mixed or contradictory feelings about something
Syn: uncertain, torn, undecided · **Ant:** decided, resolute
HOOK: AMBI (both) + VALENT (strong) — strong pulls in both directions

sedition *n.*
"Critics argue that criticism of the government alone cannot amount to sedition in a free society."
Meaning: conduct or speech inciting resistance to or rebellion against lawful authority
Syn: incitement, subversion, rebellion · **Ant:** loyalty, allegiance
HOOK: SE (apart) + ITION (going) — going apart from the State

ratify *v.*
"Parliament must ratify the treaty by law before its terms bind domestic courts."
Meaning: to give formal consent to something, making it officially valid
Syn: confirm, endorse, approve · **Ant:** repeal, annul
HOOK: RATI (calculated, fixed) — makes an agreement fixed and valid

fallacious *adj.*
"The argument that every delay is deliberate is fallacious, because many delays arise from crowded dockets."
Meaning: based on a mistaken belief or faulty reasoning
Syn: illogical, erroneous, unsound · **Ant:** valid, sound
HOOK: FALLACY + ious — full of fallacy

corroborate *v.*
"The medical report corroborates the eyewitness account of the time of injury."
Meaning: to confirm or support a statement with additional evidence
Syn: confirm, bear out, support · **Ant:** contradict, undermine
HOOK: COR (together) + ROBUR (strength) — strength added together

inordinate *adj.*
"An inordinate delay in framing charges weakens the accused's right to a speedy trial."
Meaning: unusually or excessively large; beyond reasonable limits
Syn: excessive, undue, immoderate · **Ant:** moderate, reasonable
HOOK: IN (not) + ORDER — not within the ordered limit

expound *v.*
"The Constitution Bench expounded the basic structure doctrine at great length."
Meaning: to present and explain a theory or point in systematic detail
Syn: elucidate, explain, set out · **Ant:** obscure, confuse
HOOK: EX (out) + POUND (place) — place the idea out in the open

CONFUSABLE PAIRS — DON'T MIX THESE UP

affect *vs* **effect**
affect: to influence or produce a change in (verb)
effect: the result of a change (noun); to bring about (verb)
TIP: Affect = Action (verb); Effect = End result (noun).

statue *vs* **statute**
statue: a carved or cast figure
statute: a written law passed by a legislature
TIP: A statUE is something you see; a statuTE is a law you must obey, with T for text.

disinterested *vs* **uninterested**
disinterested: impartial; having no personal stake
uninterested: not interested; bored
TIP: A judge must be DISinterested (neutral), not UNinterested (careless).

principal *vs* **principle**
principal: chief or main; head of an institution; original sum of money
principle: a fundamental rule or belief
TIP: The princiPAL is your PAL at school; princiPLE ends like ruLE.

emigrate *vs* **immigrate**
emigrate: to leave one's own country to settle elsewhere
immigrate: to come into a country to settle there
TIP: Emigrate = Exit; Immigrate = Into.

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NAME: _____ ROLL NO: _____ BATCH: _____

IDIOMS & ONE-WORD SUBSTITUTION

Idioms in context

- **in the dock** — on trial; facing public scrutiny or blame
  "With the audit report public, the entire department found itself in the dock."
- **the letter of the law** — the exact literal wording of a rule, as opposed to its purpose
  "The officer followed the letter of the law yet defeated its spirit by refusing a hearing."
- **to turn a blind eye** — to deliberately ignore something one knows is wrong
  "The regulator turned a blind eye to repeated breaches until the disaster forced action."
- **read the riot act** — to reprimand someone severely and formally
  "The bench read the riot act to the department for ignoring its dictum on timely disclosure."

One-word substitution

- a written statement made on oath, used as evidence in court → **affidavit**
- one who gives evidence of what he has seen → **eyewitness**
- the killing of one's own brother or sister → **fratricide**
- One who gives orders in an overbearing manner → **dictatorial**
- a person who makes a will → **testator**

WORDS IN THE WILD — FROM TODAY'S NEWSPAPER

- **arduous** — involving great effort; difficult and tiring
  "Reforming the criminal justice system is an arduous task that no single statute can complete." — Illustrative editorial usage
- **tangible** — real and capable of being clearly seen or measured
  "Courts want tangible proof of loss, not a vague claim of inconvenience, before awarding compensation." — Illustrative editorial usage
- **scrutiny** — critical and careful examination
  "Any law that curbs a fundamental right must withstand the strictest judicial scrutiny." — Illustrative editorial usage
- **unwavering** — steady and firm; not changing or doubting
  "The bench's unwavering insistence on a reasoned order has improved the quality of administrative decisions." — Illustrative editorial usage

LEGAL & LATIN TERMS EVERY ASPIRANT MUST KNOW

- **obiter dictum** — a remark by the way — a judge's observation not essential to the decision and so not binding
- **ratio decidendi** — the reason for the decision — the binding legal principle on which a judgment rests
- **ultra vires** — beyond the powers — an act done outside the authority conferred by law
- **sub judice** — under judicial consideration — a matter pending before a court
- **suo motu** — on its own motion — action taken by a court without a petition being filed
- **bona fide** — in good faith — honestly and without intent to deceive
- **mala fide** — in bad faith — with dishonest or improper intent
- **locus standi** — place of standing — the right of a party to approach and be heard by a court
- **res judicata** — a matter already judged — bars re-litigation of a finally decided issue
- **sine die** — without a day — adjourned with no date fixed to meet again
- **stare decisis** — to stand by decided matters — the doctrine that courts follow precedent
- **habeas corpus** — you may have the body — a writ directing that a detained person be produced before the court

PRACTICE DRILL

1. The senior counsel's citation was so ___ that it resolved the dispute over interpretation without further argument.
A) inordinate · B) apposite · C) sedition · D) ambivalent

2. The State's plea that the accused had absconded was not ___ once the record showed he had reported weekly to the police.
A) tenable · B) tantamount · C) apposite · D) contentious

3. A ___ delay of nine years in deciding a simple appeal shakes public faith in the courts.
A) fallacious · B) corroborated · C) inordinate · D) ratified

4. The second witness ___ the first witness's account of the sequence of events.
A) corroborated · B) ratified · C) expounded · D) contradicted

5. The Court's reply was ___: it welcomed the reform's purpose yet doubted the means chosen.
A) fallacious · B) ambivalent · C) apposite · D) tantamount

6. Treaties signed by the executive take domestic effect only when Parliament chooses to ___ them by law.
A) corroborate · B) ratify · C) tenable · D) expound

7. An argument that assumes what it sets out to prove is ___, however confidently stated.
A) tenable · B) apposite · C) fallacious · D) contentious

8. Holding a person in custody beyond the legal limit is ___ to illegal detention.
A) ambivalent · B) fallacious · C) tantamount · D) inordinate

9. Which word below is formed from the root meaning 'to say' and refers to a formal charge?
A) expound · B) ratify · C) corroborate · D) indict

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

ETYMOLOGY TRAIL

The Latin root dict, to say, gives edict, verdict, indict and jurisdiction. A court with jurisdiction hears the indictment, weighs whether the claim is **tenable**, *and demands that each witness* **corroborate** *the other before it delivers its verdict. Counsel who cites an* **apposite** *precedent can* **expound** *the law with clarity, while an* **ambivalent** *bench may* **ratify** *a reform only after an* **inordinate** *delay.*

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