## ROOT OF THE DAY

**cid / cis** — *Latin caedere (-cidere, -cisus in compounds) — to cut, to kill · "cut; kill"*

**decide** — de- (off) + cid (cut) = to cut off every other option and settle on one
**concise** — con- (thoroughly) + cis (cut) = cut down to the essentials; brief but complete
**precise** — pre- (in front) + cis (cut) = cut off sharply at the edge; exact, with nothing extra
**incision** — in- (into) + cis (cut) + -ion = a cut made into something, as by a surgeon
**homicide** — homo (human being) + cid (kill) = the killing of one human being by another
**genocide** — genos (race, people) + cid (kill) = the deliberate killing of a national, ethnic or religious group

## POWER WORDS

**incisive** *adj.*
*"The Bench praised the amicus for an incisive note that reduced forty pages of pleadings to three clear questions of law."*
**Meaning:** sharply clear and direct in analysis; going straight to the heart of a matter
**Syn:** penetrating, perceptive, acute · **Ant:** superficial, vague, woolly
**HOOK:** in- (into) + cis (cut) = cutting into the core of an issue

**fratricidal** *adj.*
*"The party's fratricidal feud over ticket distribution handed the rival alliance an easy win."*
**Meaning:** involving conflict or killing among members of the same family, group or nation
**Syn:** internecine, divisive, self-destructive · **Ant:** united, harmonious, fraternal
**HOOK:** frater (brother) + cid (kill) = killing one's own brother

**vexatious** *adj.*
*"The High Court dismissed the vexatious petition, the litigant's ninth on the same land dispute, with heavy costs."*
**Meaning:** (of legal action) brought without sufficient grounds, chiefly to harass the other side
**Syn:** harassing, groundless, oppressive · **Ant:** legitimate, well-founded, bona fide
**HOOK:** Latin vexare = to shake, to harass; a vexatious suit is filed to wear the opponent down

**condone** *v.*
*"The court condoned the delay of 40 days in filing the appeal, finding that the appellant had been in hospital."*
**Meaning:** to overlook or excuse an offence or lapse; in law, to excuse a delay for sufficient cause
**Syn:** overlook, excuse, pardon · **Ant:** condemn, punish, denounce
**HOOK:** con- (completely) + donare (give) = to give away the fault entirely

**chicanery** *n.*
*"The tribunal found that the backdated invoices were mere chicanery designed to claim refunds that were never due."*
**Meaning:** the use of trickery to deceive, especially in legal or financial matters
**Syn:** trickery, deception, sharp practice · **Ant:** honesty, candour, fair dealing
**HOOK:** French chicaner = to quibble; chicanery is quibbling used to cheat

**abjure** *v.*
*"Before it was admitted to the peace talks, the militant group was required to abjure violence publicly."*
**Meaning:** to renounce a belief, claim or practice solemnly
**Syn:** renounce, forswear, repudiate · **Ant:** affirm, embrace, uphold
**HOOK:** ab- (away) + jurare (swear) = to swear away from something

**excise** *v.*
*"The court did not strike down the whole Act; it excised the offending proviso and let the rest of the statute stand."*
**Meaning:** to cut out or remove a passage, clause or part
**Syn:** remove, delete, strike out · **Ant:** insert, add, retain
**HOOK:** ex- (out) + cis (cut) = to cut out; the tax word 'excise' comes from a different, Dutch source

**obfuscate** *v.*
*"Instead of answering the RTI query, the department tried to obfuscate the issue with a list of irrelevant circulars."*
**Meaning:** to make something deliberately unclear or confusing
**Syn:** obscure, muddle, confuse · **Ant:** clarify, elucidate, illuminate
**HOOK:** ob- (over) + fuscus (dark) = to darken over, so that nothing is seen clearly

**contumacious** *adj.*
*"A contractor who wilfully ignored three orders to restore the road was held guilty of contumacious disobedience."*
**Meaning:** stubbornly and wilfully disobedient to authority, especially to a court
**Syn:** defiant, insubordinate, rebellious · **Ant:** obedient, compliant, submissive
**HOOK:** Latin contumax = stubborn; one who swells (tumere) with defiance against authority

**obviate** *v.*
*"The new e-filing rules are meant to obviate the need for litigants to travel to the registry."*
**Meaning:** to remove a need or difficulty in advance; to make unnecessary
**Syn:** preclude, prevent, remove · **Ant:** necessitate, require, cause
**HOOK:** ob (in the way) + via (road) = to meet the obstacle on the road and clear it before it arrives

**obdurate** *adj.*
*"Despite three reminders from the Information Commission, the obdurate officer refused to supply the records."*
**Meaning:** stubbornly refusing to change one's opinion or course of action
**Syn:** unyielding, inflexible, adamant · **Ant:** flexible, yielding, tractable
**HOOK:** ob- (against) + durus (hard) = hardened against every persuasion

**inveigh** *v.*
*"Opposition MPs inveighed against the bill, calling it an assault on the federal structure."*
**Meaning:** to speak or write about something with great hostility
**Syn:** rail, fulminate, denounce · **Ant:** praise, commend, support
**HOOK:** in- (against) + vehere (carry) = to carry an attack against someone

## CONFUSABLE PAIRS — DON'T MIX THESE UP

**abjure** *vs* **adjure**
**abjure:** to renounce a belief or practice solemnly
**adjure:** to urge or command someone solemnly
**TIP:** Ab- = away: you abjure violence. Ad- = towards: you adjure a witness to tell the truth.

**contumacious** *vs* **contumelious**
**contumacious:** stubbornly disobedient to authority
**contumelious:** insolently insulting in speech or conduct
**TIP:** Contumacious conduct defies an order; contumelious words insult a person.

**incisive** *vs* **decisive**
**incisive:** sharply clear in analysis
**decisive:** settling an issue conclusively; resolute in choosing
**TIP:** An incisive argument cuts to the core; a decisive argument ends the dispute.

**condone** *vs* **condole**
**condone:** to overlook or excuse an offence or delay
**condole:** to express sympathy with someone in grief
**TIP:** A court condones a delay; friends condole with a grieving family.

**excise** *vs* **exorcise**
**excise:** to cut out a part or clause
**exorcise:** to drive out an evil spirit, or free oneself of a troubling memory
**TIP:** A drafter excises a clause; a priest exorcises a spirit.

## IDIOMS & ONE-WORD SUBSTITUTION

**One-word substitution**

- the killing of a newborn or infant child → **infanticide**

NAME: _____ ROLL NO: _____ BATCH: _____

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**Idioms in context**

- **to cut to the chase** — to come straight to the main point without wasting time
  *"After ten minutes of preliminaries, the judge asked counsel to cut to the chase and state the relief sought."*
- **a cut above** — noticeably better than others of the same kind
  *"With its careful reasoning and clear drafting, the Commission's report was a cut above the usual official review."*
- **to cut no ice** — to have no effect or influence on someone
  *"The plea that the builder was unaware of the coastal rules cut no ice with the tribunal."*
- **cut and dried** — already settled and not open to discussion or doubt
  *"The question of limitation is rarely cut and dried, because courts may condone delay for sufficient cause."*

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

- **inexplicable** — impossible to explain or account for
  *"In Shatrughan Chauhan v. Union of India (2014), the Supreme Court held that inordinate and inexplicable delay in deciding mercy petitions is itself a ground to commute a death sentence to life imprisonment, and that the solitary confinement of death-row convicts is illegal."* — *CLAT Gurukul daily brief (SC stays death sentence, 2008 Ahmedabad blasts), 2 Oct 2026*
- **unsustainable** — (of an order or argument) unable to be upheld or defended; not able to continue
  *"By granting 34% to BCs over and above the quotas already extended to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the impugned Government Orders pushed the aggregate figure past this threshold, rendering them constitutionally unsustainable."* — *CLAT Gurukul daily brief (AP HC strikes down 34% BC quota in local bodies), 2 Oct 2026*
- **sidestep** — to avoid a problem or difficulty by going round it rather than facing it
  *"iPSCs let scientists reprogramme mature cells back into a pluripotent state, sidestepping many of the ethical concerns tied to embryonic stem cells."* — *CLAT Gurukul daily brief (Stanford brain-organoid transplant in mice), 2 Oct 2026*
- **dovetail** — to fit together neatly with something else, like the interlocking joints of a carpenter
  *"Financial literacy from Class 9 dovetails with the broader push for a financially aware citizenry, reinforced by the investor-education efforts of regulators such as the RBI and SEBI."* — *CLAT Gurukul daily brief (NCERT Class 9 personal-finance chapter), 2 Oct 2026*

## LEGAL & LATIN TERMS EVERY ASPIRANT MUST KNOW

- **causa causans** — the immediate, effective cause of a loss, as distinct from mere background conditions
- **sic utere tuo ut alienum non laedas** — use your own property so as not to injure another's; the root of the law of nuisance
- **reformatio in peius** — a change for the worse; an appellate court should not worsen the appellant's position on his own appeal
- **ultra petita** — beyond what was asked; a court or tribunal should not grant relief that no party sought
- **ex dolo malo non oritur actio** — no right of action arises from fraud
- **id certum est quod certum reddi potest** — that is certain which can be made certain; a price or term fixable by a stated method is not too vague
- **fiat justitia ruat caelum** — let justice be done though the heavens fall
- **nemo potest esse simul actor et judex** — no one can be at the same time suitor and judge in a cause
- **qui sentit commodum sentire debet et onus** — one who takes the benefit must also bear the burden
- **judex damnatur cum nocens absolvitur** — the judge is condemned when the guilty is acquitted
- **cessante ratione legis cessat ipsa lex** — when the reason for a law ceases, the law itself ceases
- **lex prospicit non respicit** — the law looks forward, not backward; statutes are presumed to be prospective
- **delegata potestas non potest delegari** — a delegated power cannot be further delegated

## RECALL CHECK — WORDS FROM EARLIER

**truncate** (learnt 7 days ago) — meaning: _____

**demur** (learnt 45 days ago) — meaning: _____

## PRACTICE DRILL

1. Her ___ cross-examination exposed, in just four questions, the gap in the witness's timeline.
   A) incisive · B) obdurate · C) vexatious · D) fratricidal
2. Rather than strike down the whole Act, the court ___ the offending proviso and saved the rest of it.
   A) abjured · B) condoned · C) excised · D) inveighed
3. The litigant's ninth petition on the same land dispute was dismissed as ___, with heavy costs.
   A) incisive · B) vexatious · C) fratricidal · D) obdurate
4. Finding that the appellant had been in hospital, the court ___ the 40-day delay in filing the appeal.
   A) inveighed · B) obfuscated · C) abjured · D) condoned
5. The new e-filing portal is meant to ___ the need for litigants to travel to the registry.
   A) obviate · B) obfuscate · C) abjure · D) condone
6. A contractor who wilfully ignored three court orders to repair the road was held guilty of ___ disobedience.
   A) incisive · B) fratricidal · C) dovetailing · D) contumacious
7. Before joining the peace talks, the militant group was asked to publicly ___ violence.
   A) condone · B) abjure · C) inveigh · D) dovetail
8. The new Class 9 chapter ___ with the wider push for financial literacy, fitting neatly into it.
   A) inveighs · B) obfuscates · C) dovetails · D) sidesteps

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

## ETYMOLOGY TRAIL

*From the Latin caedere, to cut or kill, we decide, keep a note concise and precise, and* **excise** *a bad clause; the same root gives homicide, genocide and a* **fratricidal** *feud. An* **incisive** *mind cuts through every attempt to* **obfuscate**, *through the* **chicanery** *of backdated invoices and the* **vexatious** *ninth petition. A court may* **condone** *a delay but not* **contumacious** *or* **obdurate** *defiance; rebels* **abjure** *violence, MPs* **inveigh** *against a bill, and good rules* **obviate** *needless travel. In the news, an inexpl delay saves a convict, a quota proves unsustainable, stem cells sidestep old objections, and a new chapter dovetails with financial literacy.*

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