ROOT OF THE DAY

tort / tors — *Latin torquere (past participle tortus) — to twist · "twist; wrench out of shape"*

tort — Latin tortum (a thing twisted) = conduct twisted away from what is right; a civil wrong for which the law gives damages
extort — ex- (out) + torquere (twist) = to twist something out of a person by force or threats
distort — dis- (apart) + torquere (twist) = to twist facts or shapes out of their true form
retort — re- (back) + torquere (twist) = to twist an argument back on the speaker; a sharp reply
tortuous — tortus (twisted) + -uous (full of) = full of twists and turns; long and complicated
torture — tortura (a twisting) = the twisting of limbs to inflict pain; any severe suffering deliberately caused

POWER WORDS

extort *v.*
"The gang extorted lakhs of rupees from shopkeepers by threatening to burn down their stalls."
Meaning: to obtain money, property or a promise from someone by force or threats
Syn: coerce, wring, exact · **Ant:** give freely, offer, donate
HOOK: ex- (out) + tort (twist) = to twist money out of a victim

distort *v.*
"The court warned that quoting one line of the witness's statement out of context would distort its meaning."
Meaning: to twist facts, words or shapes so that they give a false picture
Syn: misrepresent, twist, garble · **Ant:** clarify, represent faithfully
HOOK: dis- (apart) + tort (twist) = to twist a thing apart from its true shape

tortuous *adj.*
"After a tortuous process of eleven years, the land acquisition dispute was finally settled."
Meaning: full of twists and turns; excessively long and complicated
Syn: convoluted, winding, labyrinthine · **Ant:** straightforward, direct, simple
HOOK: tortus (twisted) = a road or process with many twists; not 'torturous', which means painful

retort *v.*
"When accused of delay, the minister retorted that the file had been pending with the previous government for three years."
Meaning: to reply sharply or angrily, turning an accusation back on the speaker
Syn: riposte, rejoin, counter · **Ant:** agree, concede, accept
HOOK: re- (back) + tort (twist) = to twist an argument back at the person who made it

duress *n.*
"A sale deed signed under duress, at the point of a gun, can be set aside by the court."
Meaning: threats, violence or unlawful pressure used to force someone to act against his will
Syn: coercion, compulsion, constraint · **Ant:** free will, consent, volition
HOOK: Latin durus (hard) = hard pressure; under the Contract Act, consent caused by coercion makes an agreement voidable

wrest *v.*
"The opposition alliance wrested control of the municipal corporation from the ruling party after two decades."
Meaning: to take something from someone by force or with great effort
Syn: seize, wrench, snatch · **Ant:** yield, surrender, hand over
HOOK: Old English wraestan (to twist) = to twist a thing out of another's grip

malign *v.*
"The petitioner alleged that the campaign was designed to malign a sitting judge and lower public faith in the court."
Meaning: to say harmful and untrue things about someone
Syn: defame, slander, vilify · **Ant:** praise, defend, extol
HOOK: Latin malignus (evil-natured), from malus (bad) = to speak badly of someone

intimidate *v.*
"The witnesses told the court that they had been intimidated by the accused's men and dared not testify."
Meaning: to frighten someone, especially in order to make him do what one wants
Syn: threaten, browbeat, cow · **Ant:** reassure, encourage, embolden
HOOK: in- (into) + timidus (fearful) = to make someone timid; criminal intimidation is an offence under the BNS

belligerent *adj.*
"Both belligerent states are bound by the Geneva Conventions even if neither has formally declared war."
Meaning: hostile and aggressive; (in international law) engaged in war
Syn: hostile, combative, warring · **Ant:** peaceable, conciliatory, neutral
HOOK: bellum (war) + gerere (wage) = waging war

vituperative *adj.*
"The debate descended into a vituperative exchange, and the Speaker had to expunge several remarks."
Meaning: full of bitter and abusive criticism
Syn: abusive, scathing, venomous · **Ant:** complimentary, gentle, mild
HOOK: vitium (fault) + parare (prepare) = preparing a list of someone's faults to hurl at him

obsequious *adj.*
"The inquiry report criticised the officers for their obsequious compliance with every verbal order of the minister."
Meaning: too eager to please or obey people in power
Syn: servile, fawning, sycophantic · **Ant:** assertive, independent, defiant
HOOK: ob- (towards) + sequi (follow) = following the powerful about too eagerly

cajole *v.*
"Unable to force the landowners to sell, the company tried to cajole them with offers of jobs for their children."
Meaning: to persuade someone gently, by flattery or promises, to do something
Syn: coax, wheedle, inveigle · **Ant:** compel, force, coerce
HOOK: from French cajoler (to chatter like a jay) = to coax with soft talk rather than force

CONFUSABLE PAIRS — DON'T MIX THESE UP

extort *vs* **exhort**
extort: to obtain something by force or threats
exhort: to urge someone strongly to do something
TIP: A gangster extorts money with a threat; a coach exhorts the team with a speech.

acquittal *vs* **acquittance**
acquittal: a court's finding that the accused is not guilty
acquittance: a written release from a debt or obligation; a receipt in full
TIP: A trial ends in acquittal; a paid creditor signs an acquittance.

obsequious *vs* **obsequies**
obsequious: too eager to please the powerful
obsequies: funeral rites
TIP: An obsequious clerk bows to the boss; mourners attend the obsequies.

intimidate *vs* **intimate**
intimidate: to frighten into doing something
intimate: (adj.) close and personal; (v.) to make known, to notify
TIP: The accused intimidates a witness; the registry intimates the date of hearing to the parties.

disparity *vs* **disparagement**
disparity: a great difference or inequality
disparagement: the act of speaking of something as worthless
TIP: Income disparity is a gap in numbers; disparagement of a rival's product is a gap in good manners.

IDIOMS & ONE-WORD SUBSTITUTION

Idioms in context

- **to twist someone's arm** — to pressure or persuade someone to do something he does not want to do

One-word substitution

- a person who obtains money from others by threats or force → **extor**
- a performer who twists the body into unusual positions → **contortic**
- a force that causes rotation; a twisting force → **torque**

NAME: _____ ROLL NO: _____ BATCH: _____

SCAN AT DESK TO COLLECT
CG-VOCAB-20261114

"The builder claimed the bank had twisted his arm into signing the revised loan terms."

- **to have someone over a barrel** — to have someone in a position where he has no choice but to accept your terms
  "With the monsoon weeks away and no other contractor available, the supplier had the municipality over a barrel."
- **to put the screws on** — to apply strong pressure or threats to force someone to act
  "The tax department put the screws on the defaulters by attaching their bank accounts."
- **to twist the knife** — to make a bad situation even more painful for someone
  "After the team's defeat, the rival captain twisted the knife by mocking their preparation."

- a person who flatters and obeys the powerful to win favour → **toady**
- a long, angry speech of criticism or accusation → **tirade**

WORDS IN THE WILD — FROM TODAY'S NEWSPAPER

- **tutelage** — the state of being under the protection, guardianship or control of another
  "Tulasamma v Sesha Reddy (1977) 3 SCC 99: cited in this judgment for the principle that Section 14(1) removed the proprietary disabilities that kept Hindu women in "perpetual tutelage", and that the word "acquired" in the Explanation has the widest amplitude, including property received in lieu of maintenance." — CLAT Gurukul daily brief (Supreme Court on a Hindu widow's limited estate, s 14 HSA), 12 Oct 2026
- **solemnise** — to perform a marriage ceremony formally
  "A statute can make a marriage voidable and punish those who solemnise it, but it is schooling, health services and changing community norms that remove the pressure to marry early." — CLAT Gurukul daily brief (International Day of the Girl Child: ending child marriage), 11 Oct 2026
- **acquittal** — a judgment that the accused is not guilty of the offence charged
  "The proviso to Section 413 BNSS (formerly the proviso to Section 372 CrPC, inserted with effect from 31 December 2009) lets a victim appeal against an acquittal, a conviction for a lesser offence, or inadequate compensation." — CLAT Gurukul daily brief (Supreme Court on a victim's right to a speedy trial), 11 Oct 2026
- **disparity** — a great difference or inequality between things
  "UNCTAD warns that this disparity "underscores the growing integration challenges for the global South, especially for the least developed countries."" — CLAT Gurukul daily brief (UNCTAD Trade and Development Report 2026), 11 Oct 2026

LEGAL & LATIN TERMS EVERY ASPIRANT MUST KNOW

- **vi et armis** — with force and arms; the old words of a pleading in trespass
- **coactus volui** — though compelled, I willed it; consent given under pressure is still consent unless the law sets it aside
- **contra bonos mores** — against good morals; an agreement of this kind is not enforced
- **injuria non excusat injuriam** — one wrong does not excuse another
- **nullus commodum capere potest de injuria sua propria** — no one may take advantage of his own wrong
- **nemo contra factum suum venire potest** — no one may go against his own act; the idea behind estoppel
- **actus dei nemini facit injuriam** — an act of God does no legal wrong to anyone
- **damnum fatale** — loss caused by an unavoidable accident or an act of God, for which no one is liable
- **in jure non remota causa sed proxima spectatur** — in law the immediate cause, not the remote one, is considered
- **lex semper dabit remedium** — the law will always give a remedy
- **sublata causa tollitur effectus** — when the cause is removed, the effect ceases
- **consensus non concubitus facit matrimonium** — consent, not cohabitation, makes a marriage

RECALL CHECK — WORDS FROM EARLIER

residuary (learnt 7 days ago) — meaning: _____

adjudicate (learnt 21 days ago) — meaning: _____

assiduous (learnt 45 days ago) — meaning: _____

PRACTICE DRILL

1. The gang ___ money from small traders by threatening to set fire to their shops.
   A) exhorted · B) extorted · C) retorted · D) cajoled
2. A promise obtained at gunpoint is not free consent; it is given under ___.
   A) tutelage · B) disparity · C) acquittal · D) duress
3. The appeal crawled through a ___ process of eleven years before it was finally heard.
   A) tortuous · B) belligerent · C) vituperative · D) obsequious
4. Taking a single line of the witness's statement out of context would ___ what he actually meant.
   A) wrest · B) malign · C) distort · D) intimidate
5. The rebels ___ control of the airport from government forces after three days of fighting.
   A) wrested · B) retorted · C) cajoled · D) maligned
6. Accused of delay, the minister ___ that the file had sat with the previous government for three years.
   A) extorted · B) exhorted · C) retorted · D) distorted
7. The report criticised the officers for their ___ obedience to every oral order of the minister.
   A) belligerent · B) obsequious · C) tortuous · D) vituperative
8. Unable to force the villagers to sell, the company tried to ___ them with promises of jobs.
   A) intimidate · B) extort · C) wrest · D) cajole

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

ETYMOLOGY TRAIL

From the Latin torquere, to twist, comes the tort, a wrong twisted away from what is right, and torture, the twisting of limbs. Twist money out of a victim and you **extort** *it; twist facts apart and you* **distort** *them; twist an accusation back and you* **retort***; a road or a lawsuit full of twists is* **tortuous***. The law sets aside consent obtained under* **duress***, punishes those who* **intimidate** *witnesses or* **malign** *the innocent, and distinguishes the bully who would* **wrest** *a thing by force from the flatterer who would* **cajole** *the* **vituperative** *critic from the* **obsequious** *courtier, and the* **belligerent** *state from the neutral. In the news, the Supreme Court recalled that Section 14 ended the perpetual tutelage of Hindu women, a statute can punish those who solemnise a child marriage, a victim may appeal against an acquittal, and UNCTAD warned of a disparity for the global South.*

SCAN AT DESK TO COLLECT
CG-VOCAB-20261114