ROOT OF THE DAY

sanct / sacr / secr — *Latin sanctus (holy), sacer (sacred) and sacrare (to make sacred) · "holy; sacred; set apart"*

sanction — sanctio, from sancire (to make sacred) = a decree made binding; hence official approval, or the penalty that backs a law
sanctity — sanctus (holy) + -ity (state) = the state of being holy, and so beyond violation
sanctuary — sanctus (holy) + -arium (place) = a holy place where, by old custom, a fugitive could not be seized
consecrate — con- (wholly) + sacrare (make sacred) = to make a place or thing wholly sacred
desecrate — de- (undo) + sacrare (make sacred) = to undo the holiness of a thing by damaging or insulting it
execrable — ex- (out) + sacer (sacred) = Latin exsecrari, to put outside the sacred, to curse; hence deserving to be cursed

POWER WORDS

sanction *v./n.*
"The Security Council may sanction the use of force, or it may impose sanctions on a State that threatens the peace."
Meaning: (v.) to give official approval to; (n.) a penalty imposed for breaking a law or rule
Syn: approve, authorise; penalty, embargo · **Ant:** forbid, veto; reward, incentive
HOOK: a rule is made 'sacred' (sanctio) in two ways: by approving it and by punishing its breach

sanctity *n.*
"The Bench stressed the sanctity of the ballot, which no executive order can be allowed to compromise."
Meaning: the quality of being sacred or so important that it must not be violated
Syn: sacredness, inviolability, holiness · **Ant:** worthlessness, profanity, triviality
HOOK: sanct (holy) + -ity (state) = the state of being holy

sanctuary *n.*
"The journalist who fled the military regime sought sanctuary in a neighbouring country's embassy."
Meaning: a place of refuge or safety; also a protected area for wildlife
Syn: refuge, haven, asylum · **Ant:** danger, exposure, peril
HOOK: sanct (holy) + -uary (place) = a holy place where medieval law forbade seizing a fugitive

sanctimonious *adj.*
"The minister's sanctimonious speech on honesty was received coldly while his own aide was under investigation."
Meaning: making a show of being morally better than other people
Syn: self-righteous, holier-than-thou, preachy · **Ant:** humble, modest, sincere
HOOK: Latin sanctimonia (holiness) = once praise, now mockery of put-on holiness

consecrate *v.*
"The war memorial was consecrated in a ceremony attended by the families of the fallen soldiers."
Meaning: to declare a place or thing sacred, or to dedicate it formally to a purpose
Syn: sanctify, dedicate, hallow · **Ant:** desecrate, profane, defile
HOOK: con- (wholly) + sacrare (make sacred) = to make wholly sacred

desecrate *v.*
"Those who desecrate a place of worship to insult a religion can be prosecuted under Section 298 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita."
Meaning: to damage, or treat with gross disrespect, something sacred
Syn: defile, violate, profane · **Ant:** consecrate, revere, honour
HOOK: de- (undo) + sacrare (make sacred) = to undo a thing's holiness

sacrilege *n.*
"Many citizens regarded the demolition of the century-old public library as nothing short of sacrilege."
Meaning: the violation or misuse of something regarded as sacred or deeply valued
Syn: desecration, profanation, blasphemy · **Ant:** reverence, piety, respect
HOOK: sacrum (sacred thing) + legere (to gather, to steal) = originally, robbing a temple

execrable *adj.*
"The court described the assault on the eight-year-old as an execrable crime that shocked the conscience of the community."
Meaning: extremely bad or wicked; deserving to be cursed
Syn: abhorrent, detestable, atrocious · **Ant:** admirable, excellent, praiseworthy
HOOK: ex- (out) + sacer (sacred) = to put a person outside the sacred, that is, to curse

profane *adj./v.*
"Using the temple courtyard as a car park, the petitioners argued, would profane a site held sacred for centuries."
Meaning: (adj.) secular, or disrespectful of sacred things; (v.) to treat something sacred with disrespect
Syn: secular, irreverent; desecrate · **Ant:** sacred, holy; revere
HOOK: pro- (outside) + fanum (temple) = outside the temple, hence not holy

venerate *v.*
"Many villages venerate the sacred groves around them, which is why these patches of forest have survived."
Meaning: to regard with great respect and reverence
Syn: revere, honour, esteem · **Ant:** despise, scorn, belittle
HOOK: Latin venerari (to worship, linked to Venus) = to love with reverence

hallowed *adj.*
"The hallowed rule that no one may be a judge in his own cause binds tribunals as much as courts."
Meaning: greatly respected and honoured; made holy
Syn: revered, sacred, venerated · **Ant:** despised, profane, unholy
HOOK: Old English halgian (to make holy) = the 'hallow' in Halloween, All Hallows' Eve

iconoclast *n.*
"An iconoclast among economists, she questioned the hallowed belief that growth alone would end poverty."
Meaning: a person who attacks cherished beliefs or established institutions
Syn: rebel, dissenter, nonconformist · **Ant:** conformist, traditionalist, loyalist
HOOK: Greek eikon (image) + klastes (breaker) = a breaker of holy images in the Byzantine image disputes

CONFUSABLE PAIRS — DON'T MIX THESE UP

sanction (v.) *vs* **sanction (n.)**
sanction (v.): to approve or authorise officially
sanction (n.): a penalty, often economic, imposed for breaking a rule
TIP: The Council sanctions a peace mission but imposes sanctions on an aggressor; read the context to know which.

hallowed *vs* **hollow**
hallowed: revered; made holy
hollow: empty inside; without real value
TIP: A hallowed principle is honoured by all; a hollow promise has nothing inside it.

profane *vs* **profound**
profane: disrespectful of sacred things; secular
profound: very deep or intense; showing great insight
TIP: A profane remark offends the faithful; a profound remark makes the listener think.

desecrate *vs* **desiccate**
desecrate: to violate something sacred
desiccate: to dry out completely
TIP: Vandals desecrate a shrine; the sun desiccates a field.

venerable *vs* **vulnerable**
venerable: respected because of age, wisdom or character
vulnerable: exposed to attack or harm
TIP: The venerable judge is honoured; the vulnerable witness needs protection.

IDIOMS & ONE-WORD SUBSTITUTION

One-word substitution

- a person who attacks cherished beliefs or established institutions → **i**

NAME: _____ ROLL NO: _____ BATCH: _____

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Idioms in context

- **a sacred cow** — an idea, custom or institution treated as above criticism
  "For decades the fertiliser subsidy was a sacred cow that no Finance Minister dared to touch."
- **holier than thou** — behaving as if one is morally better than others
  "The party's holier-than-thou stand on corruption collapsed when its own treasurer was arrested."
- **to take something as gospel** — to accept something as completely true without questioning it
  "A trial court must not take a confession as gospel; it must test it against the rest of the evidence."
- **to put someone on a pedestal** — to admire someone so much that one sees none of his faults
  "Voters who put a leader on a pedestal are often the last to notice his failures."

- a place where a person is protected from arrest or harm → **sanctuary**
- the act of damaging or insulting a sacred place or object → **desecration**
- a show of being morally superior to others → **sanctimony**
- the official declaration of a dead person as a saint → **canonisation**

WORDS IN THE WILD — FROM TODAY'S NEWSPAPER

- **disenfranchisement** — the act of depriving a person of the right to vote or of another right of a citizen
  "The bloc characterised the SIR exercise as a vehicle for disenfranchisement of minority voters, demanding an immediate halt and independent audit." — *CLAT Gurukul daily brief (SIR Belagavi: bulk Form-7s targeting Muslim voters), 1 Oct 2026*
- **evergreening** — the practice of extending a patent's life by claiming a fresh patent for a minor change to an existing product
  "Critically, India retained Section 3(d) — a provision that prevents "evergreening" of pharmaceutical patents by requiring genuine innovation (not just minor modifications) for patent protection." — *CLAT Gurukul daily brief (India climbs to 38th in WIPO Global Innovation Index 2026), 1 Oct 2026*
- **subvention** — a grant of money, usually from a government, that supports an activity or lowers its cost
  "Most government support to small businesses has historically come as credit — guarantees, interest subvention or priority-sector lending." — *CLAT Gurukul daily brief (Cabinet clears ITLA and a Rs 10,000 crore SME fund), 7 Oct 2026*
- **unglamorous** — lacking glamour or excitement, though often useful or necessary
  "Mangrol will not make headlines the way an aircraft carrier or a submarine does, but coastal anti-submarine defence is the kind of unglamorous capability that keeps ports open and fleets safe." — *CLAT Gurukul daily brief (INS Mangrol: the Navy's new anti-submarine shallow water craft), 10 Oct 2026*

LEGAL & LATIN TERMS EVERY ASPIRANT MUST KNOW

- **res sacrae** — sacred things; in Roman law, things dedicated to the gods, which no private person could own or sell
- **res extra commercium** — things outside commerce; things that cannot be bought or sold, such as public roads or places of worship
- **domus sua cuique est tutissimum refugium** — every person's house is his safest refuge; the basis of protection of the home from unlawful entry
- **malum in se** — wrong in itself; an act such as murder that is evil by its very nature
- **malum prohibitum** — wrong because prohibited; an act that is an offence only because a statute forbids it
- **nemo est supra leges** — no one is above the law
- **jura novit curia** — the court knows the law; the parties prove the facts and the court applies the law
- **jus divinum** — divine law; law believed to come from God rather than from a human lawgiver
- **jus naturale** — natural law; principles of justice said to bind all people by reason alone
- **sanctum sanctorum** — the holy of holies; the innermost and most private place
- **summum jus summa injuria** — the strictest law is the greatest injustice; rigid application of a rule can defeat justice
- **fons et origo** — the source and origin; the root cause of something

RECALL CHECK — WORDS FROM EARLIER

loquacious (learnt 7 days ago) — meaning: _____

adjudicate (learnt 21 days ago) — meaning: _____

assiduous (learnt 45 days ago) — meaning: _____

PRACTICE DRILL

1. Spraying slogans on the war memorial was condemned as an attempt to ____ a site the whole town honours.
A) sanction · B) desecrate · C) venerate · D) consecrate

2. The Bench held that the ____ of the secret ballot cannot be traded away for administrative convenience.
A) sanctuary · B) sacrilege · C) iconoclast · D) sanctity

3. His ____ lecture on honesty was received coldly, given the cases pending against his own party.
A) sanctimonious · B) hallowed · C) venerated · D) consecrated

4. After the missile test, the Council imposed fresh economic ____ on the regime.
A) sanctuaries · B) sacrileges · C) sanctions · D) sanctities

5. The new temple was ____ in a ceremony attended by priests from three States.
A) desecrated · B) profaned · C) defiled · D) consecrated

6. The judge called the assault on the child ____, a crime that shocked the whole community.
A) execrable · B) sanctimonious · C) unglamorous · D) hallowed

7. Under interest ____, the government pays part of the interest so that a small firm borrows more cheaply.
A) disenfranchisement · B) subvention · C) evergreening · D) sanctuary

8. Section 3(d) stops a drug company from ____ its patent by claiming a fresh one for a trivial change.
A) subvention · B) desecrating · C) evergreening · D) sanctifying

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

ETYMOLOGY TRAIL

From the Latin sanctus and sacer, holy and sacred, a decree made binding became a **sanction***, the holiness of a thing its* **sanctity***, and a holy place where no fugitive could be seized a* **sanctuary***; to make a place wholly sacred is to* **consecrate** *it, to undo its holiness is to* **desecrate** *it, and a deed put outside the sacred is* **execrable***. Robbing a temple was once* **sacrilege***, the space outside the temple was* **profane***, and the believer who venerates a* **hallowed** *custom may meet the* **iconoclast** *who breaks it, or the* **sanctimonious** *critic who only pretends to piety. In the news, opposition parties feared the disenfranchisement of minority voters in Belagavi, India kept Section 3(d) against evergreening of drug patents, the Cabinet looked beyond loans and interest subvention to help small firms, and INS Mangrol took on the unglamorous work of keeping ports safe.*

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