ROOT OF THE DAY

grat — *Latin gratus (pleasing, thankful) and gratia (favour, thanks) · "pleasing, favour, thanks"*

gratuitous — Latin gratuitus (freely given, spontaneous), from gratus = given free, hence also given without any call for it
ingratiate — Latin in gratiam (into favour), on the model of Italian ingraziare = to work oneself into someone's favour
gratuity — Old French gratuité, from Medieval Latin gratuitas (a free gift), from gratuitus = a payment of thanks
ingrate — Latin ingratus: in- (not) + gratus (thankful) = an ungrateful person
gratify — Latin gratificari (to do a favour): gratus (pleasing) + facere (make) = to make pleased
gratis — Latin gratiis, 'for thanks only' (ablative plural of gratia) = free of charge

POWER WORDS

gratuitous *adj.*
"The minister's gratuitous swipe at the opposition leader's family turned a calm debate on the budget into a shouting match."
Meaning: (1) uncalled for; done without good reason; (2) given free, without payment or consideration
Syn: needless, uncalled-for, unjustified · **Ant:** justified, warranted, necessary
HOOK: Latin gratuitus (freely given): in law a gratuitous promise or bailment is one made without consideration; in speech a gratuitous jibe is one nobody had earned

gratuity *n.*
"Under the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972, an employee who has completed five years of continuous service is entitled to gratuity on leaving the job."
Meaning: (1) a lump sum paid to an employee on leaving service, in recognition of long service; (2) a tip given for a service
Syn: tip, bonus, end-of-service benefit · **Ant:** fee, charge, levy
HOOK: Medieval Latin gratuitas (a free gift): once a gift of thanks, now a statutory right of the long-serving employee

gratify *v.*
"The verdict gratified the victim's family, who had waited eleven years for the trial to end."
Meaning: to give pleasure or satisfaction to; to indulge a desire
Syn: please, satisfy, delight · **Ant:** displease, disappoint, frustrate
HOOK: gratus (pleasing) + facere (make) = to make pleased; 'instant gratification' is pleasure without waiting

unctuous *adj.*
"The witness's unctuous praise of the magistrate only made the court more suspicious of his testimony."
Meaning: excessively flattering or ingratiating in an oily, insincere way
Syn: oily, smarmy, fawning · **Ant:** sincere, blunt, candid
HOOK: Medieval Latin unctuosus, from unctus (anointed), from unguere (to anoint), as in unguent: an unctuous man seems smeared with oil

sinecure *n.*
"Critics called the newly created post of 'adviser for coordination' a sinecure for a defeated candidate."
Meaning: a paid position that requires little or no work
Syn: cushy post, soft berth, easy job · **Ant:** demanding post, hard grind, heavy charge
HOOK: Latin sine cura (without care): originally a church office paid without the 'cure' (care) of souls

honorarium *n.*
"Guest faculty at the law school receive an honorarium for each lecture rather than a monthly salary."
Meaning: a payment for professional services that are nominally given free, or for which custom forbids a fixed fee
Syn: fee, payment, remuneration · **Ant:** unpaid service, free service
HOOK: Latin honorarium (donum), an 'honorary gift' made on taking office: you are honoured, not hired

ingratiate *v.*
"The new minister tried to ingratiate himself with party workers by promising every district a medical college."
Meaning: to bring oneself into another's favour, especially by flattery or deliberate effort
Syn: curry favour, fawn, toady · **Ant:** alienate, antagonise, offend
HOOK: in gratiam (into favour); always reflexive: you ingratiate YOURSELF WITH someone

ingrate *n.*
"Rescued from bankruptcy by his business partner, he proved an ingrate and sued her within a year."
Meaning: an ungrateful person; one who repays kindness with neglect or harm
Syn: thankless person, ungrateful wretch · **Ant:** grateful person, loyal friend
HOOK: in- (not) + gratus (thankful); the noun of ingratitude

requite *v.*
"The court observed that the State cannot requite years of wrongful imprisonment merely by releasing the prisoner; it must also pay compensation."
Meaning: to make a fitting return for a kindness, a wrong or a feeling; to repay
Syn: repay, reciprocate, avenge · **Ant:** ignore, neglect, leave unrewarded
HOOK: re- (back) + quite, an old form of quit (to pay, settle); unrequited love is love never repaid

blandishment *n.*
"Despite the blandishments of rival parties, the independent MLAs refused to switch sides before the floor test."
Meaning: flattering words or actions used to coax someone into doing something (usually plural)
Syn: flattery, cajolery, inducement · **Ant:** threat, coercion, intimidation
HOOK: Latin blandiri (to flatter), from blandus (smooth-tongued), the same word that gave English 'bland'

propitiate *v.*
"Ancient rulers built temples and made offerings to propitiate the river deity before the monsoon."
Meaning: to win or regain the favour of a god or person by doing something that pleases them; to appease
Syn: appease, placate, conciliate · **Ant:** provoke, anger, antagonise
HOOK: Latin propitiare (to make favourable), from propitius (favourable, gracious)

CONFUSABLE PAIRS — DON'T MIX THESE UP

gratis *vs* **gratuitous**
gratis: free of charge
gratuitous: uncalled for, without good reason (only in law also 'without consideration')
TIP: A gratis ticket costs nothing; gratuitous violence is not free violence but needless violence.

honorarium *vs* **honorary**
honorarium: a payment for services nominally given free
honorary: held as an honour, usually without pay or the usual duties
TIP: An honorary consul holds a title; a visiting lecturer receives an honorarium, which is money.

credible *vs* **creditable**
credible: believable, convincing
creditable: deserving praise or credit, though not outstanding
TIP: A credible witness is believed; a creditable performance is praised. Credible = can believe; creditable = gives credit.

grateful *vs* **gratified**
grateful: thankful to someone for a kindness
gratified: pleased or satisfied by an outcome
TIP: You are grateful TO a person FOR help; you are gratified BY a result. The first owes thanks, the second feels pleasure.

IDIOMS & ONE-WORD SUBSTITUTION

NAME: _____ ROLL NO: _____ BATCH: _____

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Idioms in context

- **to curry favour** — to try to win someone's approval by flattery or obliging behaviour; from Middle English 'curry favel', to groom Fauvel, the cunning horse of a French satire
  "Some officers curried favour with the new chief secretary by praising every circular he issued."
- **to bite the hand that feeds you** — to harm or turn against someone who has helped or supported you
  "By leaking the trust's accounts to its rivals, the former scholarship holder bit the hand that had fed him."
- **to look a gift horse in the mouth** — to find fault with something received as a gift or favour (horses' age is judged from their teeth)
  "The village was offered a free solar plant, and the panchayat sensibly chose not to look a gift horse in the mouth."
- **there is no such thing as a free lunch** — nothing is truly free; every apparent gift has a hidden cost or condition
  "The 'free' app harvests users' location data, a reminder that there is no such thing as a free lunch."

One-word substitution

- a person to whom a gift is made → **donee**
- a person who lives by begging, especially a member of a religious order that depends on alms → **mendicant**
- a retired professor who keeps the title as an honour → **emeritus**
- a person who takes advantage of others' generosity without giving anything in return → **freeloader**
- a person who gives money or help to a person, institution or cause → **benefactor**

WORDS IN THE WILD — FROM TODAY'S NEWSPAPER

- **custodial** — relating to custody or confinement; a custodial law treats people mainly as persons to be detained and guarded
  "Mental health policy in India has moved, within a decade, from a custodial 1987 law to a rights-based 2017 Act, and from hospital-centred care towards phone lines, district teams and primary health centres." — *CLAT Gurukul daily brief (World Mental Health Day 2026, Tele-MANAS and the Mental Healthcare Act), 10 Oct 2026*
- **syllogism** — a form of deductive reasoning in which a conclusion is drawn from two premises (a major and a minor premise)
  "The core of the judgment is a short but powerful constitutional syllogism." — *CLAT Gurukul daily brief (Madras High Court on look-out circulars against a loan guarantor, Article 21), 8 Oct 2026*
- **aggrieved** — feeling resentment at unfair treatment; in law, having suffered a wrong that gives a right to seek a remedy
  "Aggrieved by the delay, she had earlier approached the Delhi High Court, which directed the trial court to finish the proceedings within two years of the framing of charges." — *CLAT Gurukul daily brief (Supreme Court on a victim's right to a speedy trial, Article 21), 11 Oct 2026*
- **paradoxically** — in a way that seems contradictory or absurd but turns out to be true
  "Concentrating bursting in a brief window, rather than spreading it over hours, is paradoxically less harmful from an ambient air quality perspective." — *CLAT Gurukul daily brief (Supreme Court's Deepavali ruling on green crackers), 1 Oct 2026*

LEGAL & LATIN TERMS EVERY ASPIRANT MUST KNOW

- **ex gratia** — 'by favour'; a payment made as a matter of grace, without admitting any legal liability
- **animus donandi** — the intention to make a gift; without it, a transfer of property is not a gift
- **gratis dictum** — a voluntary assertion; a statement a person makes without being under any legal duty to make it
- **do ut des** — 'I give that you may give'; a Roman-law class of exchange in which a thing is given for a thing
- **do ut facias** — 'I give that you may do'; a thing is given in return for an act or service
- **honoris causa** — 'for the sake of honour'; used of degrees conferred as an honour, without examination
- **ex mero motu** — 'of one's own mere motion'; done voluntarily, without any request or prompting
- **pactum de non petendo** — an agreement by a creditor not to sue the debtor for a debt
- **quantum valebat** — 'as much as it was worth'; a claim for the reasonable value of goods supplied where no price was fixed
- **a fortiori** — 'from the stronger (reason)'; with even greater force: if the greater is true, the lesser follows

RECALL CHECK — WORDS FROM EARLIER

renounce (learnt 7 days ago) — meaning: _____

prolix (learnt 21 days ago) — meaning: _____

pernicious (learnt 45 days ago) — meaning: _____

PRACTICE DRILL

1. Critics said the film's ____ violence added nothing to the story and was there only to shock.
A) gratified · B) propitiated · C) gratuitous · D) requited

2. A post that carries a large salary and an official car but almost no duties is a ____.
A) sinecure · B) honorarium · C) gratuity · D) blandishment

3. Eager to ____ himself with the new principal, the teacher volunteered for every committee.
A) gratify · B) requite · C) propitiate · D) ingratiate

4. In the phrase 'unrequited love', the word 'unrequited' means:
A) unconditional and freely offered · B) not returned or repaid · C) not yet openly declared · D) undeserved and unfair

5. On retiring after twenty years of continuous service, the clerk received a lump-sum ____ under the 1972 Act.
A) gratuity · B) honorarium · C) sinecure · D) blandishment

6. Which word is closest in meaning to 'blandishment'?
A) coercion · B) penalty · C) flattery · D) indifference

7. The ____ courtier praised every decree of the king, however foolish it was.
A) ingrate · B) unctuous · C) gratis · D) custodial

8. A promise to give a friend a car for nothing, made without any consideration, is a ____ promise.
A) custodial · B) unctuous · C) aggrieved · D) gratuitous

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

ETYMOLOGY TRAIL

From Latin gratus, pleasing and thankful, an uninvited remark became **gratuitous***, courting favour became to* **ingratiate***, a payment of thanks became a* **gratuity***, a thankless became an* **ingrate***, to please is to* **gratify***, and what is free is gratis. Quit gave* **requite***; flattery gave* **unctuous** *and* **blandishment***; a post sine cura is a* **s** *you* **propitiate** *an angry god; an honour-fee is an* **honorarium***. In the news: a custodial law, a court's syllogism, an aggrieved complainant, and a paradoxically safe*

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