

General Legal Terms Every Law Aspirant Should Know

- Abatement- act of eliminating
- Abessive- denoting absence of a case
- Abjure- to pronounce solemnly on oath
- Absist- passing away of any legal right
- Accrue: to come into existence as an enforceable right or claim.
- Ad interim: in the mean time i.e. for a temporary period of time.
- Adjudicate: to make an official judgement or decision upon a certain issue by a competent authority i.e. to determine the rights of the parties to the suit
- Accede- to consent or agree
- Accroach- to exercise power without authority
- Agnates- relatives whose relationship can be traced wholly through males
- Arson- crime of unlawfully destroying property by fire
- Antimony- a contradiction in law
- Accessory- a person who is concerned in the crime but does not actually commit the crime
- Ad hoc- formed for a particular purpose
- Affiant- one who makes an affidavit
- Affray- unlawful fighting or use of force to intimidate others
- Alien –a person who resides within the border of the country but is not subject of that country
- Alms- charitable donations
- Alimony- a court ordered allowance that one spouse pays to the other spouse for maintenance and support while they are separated.
- Annulment- judicial act of nullifying
- Approver- an accomplice who turn's prosecutors witness
- Battery- crime of actual or intended use of physical force on a person
- Bear- one who sells stocks or shares short i.e. without possessing what he sells but intending to buy in later when the prices has fallen
- Bequest- act of giving personal property by will
- Blasphemy- attacking religion or religious tenets
- Bootlegging- the illegal manufacture, distribution, or sale of goods, especially alcohol or recordings.
- Bottomry- a system of merchant insurance in which a ship is used as security against a loan to finance a voyage, the lender losing their money if the ship sinks.
- Bull- one who buys shares not intedning to take delivery but to resell at a higher price
- Banco- a seat or bench of justices
- Buggery- act consisting of anal intercourse which is considered as unnatural in law
- Bullpen- It refers to an area in a prison where prisoners are kept in close confinement.

- Burglary- illegal entry of a building with intent to commit a crime, especially theft.
- Caveat- a warning or proviso
- Charge: framing of formal accusation against someone in a criminal court
- Conclusive proof: when a fact when proved is considered as conclusive proof of another then the court shall presume such fact and no evidence to rebut this presumption will be allowed to be given by the court.
- Corporeal: physical objects which are capable of physical manifestation
- Censure- an official reprimand
- Chattel- movable property
- Condonation- the pardoning of an offence
- Consanguinity- consanguinity is the quality of being descended from the same ancestor as another person i.e. relationship by blood
- Contraband- prohibited by law
- Covenant- an agreement in writing to do or not to do something
- Dactylography- it refers to the scientific study of fingerprints as a method of identification
- Derogation- an exemption from or relaxation of a rule or law
- Doli in capax: deemed incapable of forming the intent to commit a crime or tort by reason small age.
- Deputation: service outside the parent department
- Domicile: place or country of residence which recognized legally.
- Dysonomy- bad laws
- Emancipation- the fact or process of being set free from legal, social, or political restrictions; liberation
- Droit- a legal right or claim
- Duress- act done under threat or fear
- Exonerate- to free a person from blame or a duty imposed on him
- Embezzlement- theft or misappropriation of funds placed in one's trust or belonging to one's employer.
- Encumbrance- a liability on property
- Extradition- an act where one jurisdiction delivers a person accused or convicted of committing a crime in another jurisdiction, over to their law enforcement.
- Fiat- a command
- Foeticide: crime of killing a baby in the womb of the mother
- Fiduciary- a relationship based on trust or good faith
- Fugitive- a person who flees or escapes
- Gale- a periodic payment of rent
- Garnish- money exacted from a new prisoner by other prisoners or as jailer's fee
- Germane- pertinent to legal issue pending before the court
- Graft- it is a form of political corruption, being the unscrupulous use of a politician's authority for personal gain.
- Gist- the ground or essence of legal action
- Gratuitous- without legal consideration
- Graymail- refers to solicited bulk email messages that are not spam
- Honorarium- payment of services given voluntarily

- Hypothecation- the practice where a debtor pledges collateral to secure a debt or as a condition precedent to the debt, or a third party pledges collateral for the debtor
- Ibid- from the same source
- Inchoate- already started but not completed
- Inculpatory: to make a person liable for the guilt
- Inter vivos: transfer between living persons
- Intra vires: acts done within the powers
- Indictment- a formal charge or accusation of a serious crime
- Intestate- not having made a will before one dies.
- Jeofail- an error or oversight in pleading
- Kin- blood relatives
- Leet- a criminal court
- Magna carta- one of the greatest common law documents and is foundation of constitutional liberty
- Malefaction- a crime or offence
- Moratorium- a legal authorization to debtors to postpone payment
- Novation- a new obligation between the same parties
- Parole- the temporary or permanent release of a prisoner before the expiry of a sentence, on the promise of good behaviour.
- Plutocracy- rule of the wealthy
- Quasi- as if it were
- Reclusion- Punishment involving civil degradation (as in the loss of the right to own property) and incarceration with hard labor.
- Reprieve- cancel or postpone the punishment of (someone, especially someone condemned to death)
- Retoreon- an act of lawful retaliation in kind for another nation's unfriendly or unfair act
- Rubric- the title of a statute or code
- Sine a die- without a fixed day
- Status quo- present condition
- Summon- also called Citation, in law, the document issued by a court ordering a specific person to appear at a specific time for some specific purpose
- Traverse- deny an allegation
- Uterine- blood of same mother and not father
- Verbatim- exactly, word for word
- Vest- to clothe with legal right
- Withersake- an enemy
- Zabeta- a stated tariff
- Zero- point from which reckoning begins
- Zap to destroy

50 Important Legal Maxims For CLAT 2024

- Ab Initio – From the beginning.

- Explanation: What does it mean when something is valid or applicable from the very start or the beginning?
Actionable per se – The act is punishable, and no proof of damage is required.
- Explanation: This refers to an action or behavior that is inherently wrong or punishable without needing to prove any specific harm or damage caused.
Actio personalis moritur cum persona – A personal right of action dies with the person.
- Explanation: When a person passes away, their legal rights also cease.
Actori incumbit onus probandi – The burden of proof is on the plaintiff.
- Explanation: In a legal case, the responsibility to provide evidence and prove their case lies with the person who initiates the lawsuit (plaintiff).
Actus Reus Non Facit Reum Nisi Mens Sit Rea – Conviction of a crime requires proof of a criminal act and intent.
- Explanation: To be found guilty of a crime, it is necessary to prove that a wrongful act was committed (actus reus) and that there was a criminal intention or guilty mind (mens rea).
Ad hoc – For the particular end or case at hand.
- Explanation: Something done or created specifically for a particular purpose or situation.
Alibi – At another place, elsewhere.
- Explanation: The claim or evidence that someone was in a different location when a crime was committed, providing them with an alibi or an alternative explanation.
Amicus Curiae – A friend of the court or member of the Bar appointed to assist the Court.
- Explanation: An individual or organization who is not directly involved in a case but offers their expertise or opinion to the court to provide additional guidance.
Ante Litem Motam – Before a suit or controversy arises.
- Explanation: Actions or events that occur before a lawsuit is filed or before a dispute arises.
Assentio mentium – The meeting of minds, mutual assents.
- Explanation: When two or more parties have a shared understanding or agreement on a particular matter.
Audi alteram partem – No man shall be condemned unheard.
- Explanation: The principle is that everyone can present their side of the story and be heard before any judgment or condemnation is passed.
Bona fide – In good faith.
- Explanation: Acting or behaving sincerely, honestly, and without deceit or ill-intention.
Bona vacantia – Goods without an owner.
- Explanation: Refers to unclaimed property or assets that have no rightful owner.
Boni iudicis est ampliare jurisdictionem – It is part of a good judge to enlarge their jurisdiction.
- Explanation: A competent judge is responsible for interpreting and applying the law broadly to ensure justice.
Caveat – A caution registered with the public court to indicate that they are not to act in a matter without giving prior notice to the caveator.

- Explanation: A notice or warning registered with the court to prevent any action or decision without notifying the party who issued the caveat.
Caveat actor – Let the doer beware.
- Explanation: A warning to the person taking action or initiating a legal process to be cautious and aware of the consequences or potential risks involved.
Caveat emptor – Let the buyer beware.
- Explanation: The principle that places the responsibility on the buyer to be cautious and diligent when making a purchase, as they are responsible for evaluating the quality and suitability of the goods or services.
Caveat venditor – Let the seller beware.
- Explanation: The principle that places the responsibility on the seller to be cautious and honest when selling a product, as they may be held accountable for any defects or misrepresentations.
Certiorari – A writ used to quash orders passed by an inferior court.
- Explanation: A legal writ that allows a higher court to review and potentially overturn a lower court's decision.
Corpus – Body.
- Explanation: Refers to the physical body of a person, often used in legal contexts such as "habeas corpus" (the right to challenge unlawful detention).
Corpus delicti – The facts and circumstances constituting a crime and concrete evidence of a crime, such as a corpse (dead body).
- Explanation: In criminal law, it refers to the concrete evidence or material elements that prove a crime has been committed.
Damnum sine injuria – Damage without injury.
- Explanation: Refers to a situation where harm or damage occurs without any legal injury, meaning there is no legal right violation.
De facto – In fact.
- Explanation: Describes a situation that exists or is true in practice, even if it may not be legally recognized or formally established.
De jure – By law.
- Explanation: Something that is recognized or established by law.
De minimis – About minimal things.
- Explanation: Refers to matters or issues that are so insignificant or minimal that they are not considered worthy of attention or legal action.
De Minimis Non Curat Lex – The law does not govern trifles or ignores insignificant details.
- Explanation: It is a legal principle stating that the law does not concern itself with minor or trivial matters.
De novo – To make something anew.
- Explanation: Refers to starting afresh or from the beginning.
Dictum – Statement of law made by a judge in the course of the decision but not necessary to the decision itself.

- Explanation: A statement or remark made by a judge in a court decision that is irrelevant or necessary to the case's outcome.
Doli incapax – Incapable of crime.
- Explanation: Refers to the presumption that a person below a certain age (usually a child) cannot commit a crime due to a lack of understanding or criminal intent.
Detinue – The tort of wrongfully holding goods that belong to someone else.
- Explanation: Refers to the wrongful act of retaining or refusing to return someone else's property or goods.
Donatio mortis causa – A gift because of death.
- Explanation: Refers to a gift given in anticipation of the donor's imminent death and is only delivered upon the donor's death.
Estoppel – Prevented from denying.
- Explanation: A legal doctrine that prevents a person from denying or contradicting a previous statement or position they have taken.
Ex gratia – As a favor.
- Explanation: Something done or given voluntarily, out of kindness or goodwill, without legal obligation.
Ex officio – By virtue of the office held.
- Explanation: By the authority or power granted to someone because of their position or
- Ex parte – Proceedings in the absence of the other party.
- Explanation: Legal proceedings or actions that take place without the presence or participation of the opposing party.
Ex post facto – After the fact or retroactively.
- Explanation: Refers to a law or action that is applied retroactively, affecting events or actions that occurred before the law was enacted.
Fatum – Beyond human foresight.
- Explanation: Something beyond human prediction or anticipation, often referring to unforeseen or uncontrollable events or circumstances.
Factum probans – Relevant fact.
- Explanation: A fact or evidence that is significant or relevant in establishing a claim or proving a case.
Fraus est celare fraudem – It is a fraud to conceal a fraud.
- Explanation: Refers to the principle that intentionally concealing or hiding fraudulent activities is considered fraudulent.
Functus officio – No longer having power or jurisdiction.
- Explanation: Describes a person or entity no longer holding the authority or jurisdiction to act in a particular capacity.
Furiosi nulla voluntas est – Mentally impaired or mentally incapable persons cannot validly sign a will, contract, or form the necessary intent to commit a crime.
- Explanation: States that individuals with mental impairments or incapacity lack the legal capacity to make valid decisions, such as signing legal documents or forming the intent required for criminal liability.
Habeas corpus – A writ used to bring a person before a judge to ensure their lawful detention.

- Explanation: A legal writ that allows individuals to challenge the lawfulness of their detention or imprisonment.
Ignorantia juris non-excusat – Ignorance of the law excuses no one.
- Explanation: The principle that not knowing or being unaware of a law does not absolve an individual from legal responsibility or liability for violating that law.
Injuria sine damno – Injury without damage.
- Explanation: Refers to a situation where there is an infringement of a legal right or interest without any actual or significant harm or damage.
Ipso facto – By the mere fact itself.
- Explanation: Something that automatically or inherently follows or results from a particular fact or action.
In promptu – In readiness.
- Explanation: Refers to being prepared or ready for something.
In lieu of – Instead of.
- Explanation: In place of or as a substitute for something else.
In personam – A legal proceeding directed against a specific individual.
- Explanation: Refers to a legal action or proceeding targeted or directed specifically against a particular individual to establish personal rights or obligations.
Innuendo – Spoken, defamatory words because they have a double meaning.
- Explanation: Refers to a statement or remark that implies a defamatory meaning or intention through indirect or veiled language.
In status quo – In the current state or condition.
- Explanation: Describes the existing or current state of affairs or circumstances.





