



# Master Legal Maxims for CLAT

DearCLAT Aspirant,

Welcome to your comprehensive guide to Legal Maxims—the time-tested principles that form the foundation of legal reasoning. These Latin phrases aren't just archaic expressions; they encapsulate centuries of legal wisdom in concise, memorable forms.

Legal maxims are fundamental to understanding how laws are interpreted and applied. They appear frequently in CLAT Legal Reasoning questions, Supreme Court judgments, and legal arguments. Mastering these maxims will not only help you solve questions faster but also develop a deeper understanding of legal principles.



This curated collection covers the most important maxims tested in CLAT, organized by legal domains. Each maxim includes its literal meaning, practical explanation, and real-world application to help you understand not just what it means, but how it's used in legal practice.

# Study Tips for Mastering Legal Maxims

- ⚖️ Learn in Context: Don't just memorize the Latin and translation. Understand the legal principle behind each maxim and when it applies.
- ⚖️ Create Flashcards: Write the Latin maxim on one side and meaning + application on the other. Regular revision with flashcards significantly improves retention.
- ⚖️ Group by Theme: Study maxims together that relate to the same area of law (contracts, torts, criminal law, evidence, etc.).
- ⚖️ Link to Cases: For important maxims, remember at least one landmark case where it was applied. This helps in legal reasoning questions.
- ⚖️ Use Mnemonics: Create memory aids for difficult Latin phrases. Break them into smaller parts that sound similar to English words.
- ⚖️ Practice Application: When solving legal reasoning questions, identify which maxim applies. This trains your brain to recognize relevant principles.
- ⚖️ Daily Revision: Learn 5-10 new maxims daily and revise previously learned ones. Consistency is key to retention.
- ⚖️



# Legal Maxims

ESSENTIAL LATIN PHRASES FOR CLAT

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CLAT Tribe  
Team

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100

## General Legal Principles

 **CLAT TRIBE**  
*Ignorantia juris non excusat*

Ignorance of law is no excuse

A person cannot escape liability by claiming they were unaware that their action was illegal. The law presumes that everyone knows the law.

### Application:

This maxim prevents people from avoiding punishment by claiming ignorance. However, there are exceptions in cases of mistake of fact or when the law is genuinely unclear.

## *Actus non facit reum nisi mens sit rea*

An act does not make one guilty unless the mind is guilty

For a person to be convicted of a crime, there must be both a guilty act (actus reus) and a guilty mind (mens rea). Both elements must be present simultaneously.

### Application:

Fundamental principle of criminal law. Exceptions exist in strict liability offenses where mens rea is not required. Key in distinguishing between intentional crimes and accidents.

## *Audi alteram partem*

Hear the other side

No person should be condemned without being given an opportunity to present their case. Both parties must be heard before a decision is made.

### Application:

Fundamental principle of natural justice. Ensures fair hearing in judicial and quasi-judicial proceedings. Violation can render a decision void.

## *Nemo judex in causa sua*

No one should be a judge in their own cause

A person cannot judge a case in which they have an interest. This ensures impartiality and prevents bias in decision-making.

### Application:

Second pillar of natural justice. Judges must recuse themselves from cases where they have personal interest. Applies to all adjudicating authorities.

## *Res ipsa loquitur*

The thing speaks for itself

In certain circumstances, the occurrence of an accident implies negligence. The defendant must prove they were not negligent rather than the plaintiff proving negligence.

### Application:

Used in tort law when harm occurs in circumstances where negligence is obvious (e.g., surgical instruments left inside a patient). Shifts burden of proof to defendant.

## *Volenti non t injuria*

To one who is willing, no harm is done

A person who voluntarily consents to a risk cannot later complain about the resulting harm. Consent negates the legal wrong.

### Application:

Defense in tort law. If a person knowingly and willingly accepts a risk, they cannot sue for injuries. Common in sports injuries and dangerous occupations.

## *Ubi jus ibi remedium*

Where there is a right, there is a remedy

Every legal right must have a corresponding legal remedy. If the law recognizes a right, it must provide a way to enforce it.



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### Application:

Fundamental to the rule of law. Ensures that violation of rights can be remedied through courts. Basis for Article 32 Constitutional Remedies) of Indian Constitution.



## *Dura lex sed lex*

The law is hard, but it is the law

Even if a law seems harsh or unjust, it must be followed until it is changed through proper legal procedures. Courts must apply the law as it stands.

**Application:**

Emphasizes that judges cannot refuse to apply valid laws merely because they disagree with them. However, courts can interpret laws reasonably to avoid harsh results.

## *Nullum crimen sine lege*

No crime without law

A person cannot be punished for an act that was not defined as a crime when it was committed. There must be a pre-existing law defining the conduct as criminal.

**Application:**

Prohibits retrospective criminal laws. Enshrined in Article 20(1) of Indian Constitution. Protects citizens from arbitrary prosecution.

## *Ei incumbit probatio qui dicit, non qui negat*

The burden of proof lies on the one who affirms, not on the one who denies

The person making a claim must prove it. The person denying the claim does not have to prove the negative.

### Application:

Fundamental principle of evidence law. In criminal cases, prosecution must prove guilt beyond reasonable doubt. In civil cases, plaintiff must prove their case on balance of probabilities.

## Contract Law

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### *Pacta sunt servanda* GLAT TRIBE

Agreements must be kept

Parties to a contract are bound to fulfill their obligations. Contracts create legally enforceable duties that must be honored.

### Application:

Foundation of contract law. Ensures sanctity of contracts. Courts will enforce valid contracts unless there are legal grounds for non-enforcement.

## *Consensus ad idem*

### Meeting of minds

For a valid contract, all parties must agree on the same thing in the same sense. There must be mutual understanding and agreement on essential terms.

#### Application:

Essential for contract formation. If parties misunderstand the subject matter, there's no valid contract. Related to the concept of "mistake" in contract law.

## *Caveat emptor*

### Let the buyer beware

The buyer is responsible for checking the quality and suitability of goods before purchase. The seller is not liable unless they actively misrepresent or conceal defects.

#### Application:

Applies to sale of goods. Modified by consumer protection laws which impose greater duties on sellers. Buyer must exercise reasonable care in inspection.

## *Expressio unius est exclusio alterius*

The expression of one thing excludes another

When a contract or law specifically mentions certain things, other similar things not mentioned are presumed to be excluded.

### Application:

Used in contract interpretation. If a contract lists specific items, those not listed are intentionally excluded. Also applies to statutory interpretation.

## *Ex turpi causa non oritur actio*

No action arises from an illegal cause

Courts will not enforce a contract that is founded on an illegal or immoral purpose. Illegal contracts are void and unenforceable.

### Application:

Contracts for illegal activities (smuggling, murder for hire, etc.) cannot be enforced. Even if one party performs, courts will not grant relief.



## *In pari delicto potior est conditio defendantis*

Where both parties are equally at fault, the position of the defendant is stronger

When both parties to an illegal contract are equally guilty, courts will not help either party. The defendant has an advantage because the plaintiff cannot enforce the contract.

### Application:

If two parties enter into an illegal agreement, neither can sue the other for breach. Courts leave the parties where they find them.

## *Quantum meruit*

As much as is deserved

If a contract is not fully performed but one party has provided some benefit, they are entitled to reasonable compensation for the work done.

### Application:

Used when contracts are terminated before completion. Prevents unjust enrichment. Party is paid for actual work performed, not the full contract price.

## *Nemo dat quod non habet*

No one can give what they do not have

A person cannot transfer better title than they possess. You cannot sell or transfer something you don't own or don't have the right to transfer.

### Application:

Applies to sale of goods and property. Protects genuine owners.  
Exceptions include sale by mercantile agent, estoppel, and sale in market overt.

## *Lex loci contractus*

The law of the place where the contract is made

A contract is governed by the law of the place where it was formed, unless parties agree otherwise.

### Application:

Important in international contracts. Determines which country's laws apply. Parties can choose governing law through choice of law clauses.

## *Impossibilium nulla obligatio est*

There is no obligation to do impossible things

A contract to do something physically or legally impossible is void.  
Law does not require performance of impossible acts.

### Application:

Contracts become void if performance becomes impossible due to supervening impossibility (destruction of subject matter, change in law, death of party in personal service contracts).

# Tort Law

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## *Injuria sine damno*



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Injury without damage

Violation of a legal right without actual harm or loss. The person whose right is violated can sue even if they suffered no monetary loss.

### Application:

Basis for nominal damages. Example: Trespass on land causes no damage but violates property rights. The landowner can still sue.

## *Damnum sine injuria*

### Damage without injury

Harm or loss suffered without violation of a legal right. Even if someone suffers damage, they cannot sue unless a legal right was infringed.

#### Application:

No liability in tort. Example: Opening a competing business causes loss to existing businesses, but there's no legal wrong if done fairly.

## *Respondeat superior*

### Let the master answer

An employer is liable for the wrongful acts of their employees committed within the scope of employment. Similar to vicarious liability.



#### Application:

Employer can be sued for employee's torts if committed during working hours and in the course of employment. Employer can later recover from employee.

## *Novus actus interveniens*

A new intervening act

If a new independent act breaks the chain of causation between the defendant's wrongful act and the plaintiff's harm, the defendant is not liable for the harm.

Application:

Breaks the chain of causation. If an independent third-party act or natural event causes the harm, original wrongdoer may not be liable.

## *Sic utere tuo ut alienum non laedas*

Use your own property so as not to injure another's

Every person must use their property in a way that does not cause harm or nuisance to others. Property rights are not absolute.



Application:

Basis for law of nuisance. You cannot use your land to create excessive noise, pollution, or other disturbances that harm neighbors.

## *Restitutio in integrum*

Restoration to original position

The aim of damages in tort is to restore the plaintiff to the position they would have been in had the tort not occurred.

Application:

Guides calculation of damages. Compensation should put plaintiff back to pre-tort position, not enrich them or punish defendant (except punitive damages).

## *Actio personalis moritur cum persona*

A personal action dies with the person

Traditionally, certain personal tort claims died with either the victim or the wrongdoer. Modern law has largely abolished this rule.

Application:

Historical principle, now modified by law. In India, most tort claims survive death and can be brought by/against legal representatives.

## *Ex gratia*

As a favor / Out of grace

Payment made without admitting liability. Given voluntarily as a gesture of goodwill, not because legally obligated.

Application:



Governments often make ex gratia payments to victims without admitting fault. Does not set a precedent or admit liability.

## *Malitia est acida / Malitia supplet aetatum*

Malice supplies age

A minor can be held liable for intentional torts if they had the capacity to understand the wrongfulness of their act and intended to do it.

Application:

Even minors can be liable for deliberate harmful acts. The test is whether the child had sufficient understanding and malicious intent.

# Criminal Law

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## *Actus reus*

Guilty act

The physical element of a crime. It refers to the actual conduct or omission that constitutes the criminal offense.

### Application:

One of two essential elements for conviction (with mens rea). Includes voluntary acts, omissions where there's duty to act, and state of affairs crimes.

## *Mens rea*

Guilty mind



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The mental element of a crime. It refers to the intention, knowledge, recklessness, or negligence accompanying the criminal act.

### Application:

Must coexist with actus reus. Different crimes require different levels of mens rea (intention, knowledge, recklessness, negligence). Absent in strict liability offenses.

## *Nulla poena sine lege*

No punishment without law

A person cannot be punished except as prescribed by law. Punishment must be authorized by existing legal provisions.

Application:

Prevents arbitrary punishment. Judges cannot create new punishments. Only penalties specified in law can be imposed.

## *In dubio pro reo*

When in doubt, for the accused

If there is reasonable doubt about guilt, the benefit must be given to the accused. Reflects the principle in "innocent until proven guilty".

Application:



Prosecution must prove guilt beyond reasonable doubt. Any significant doubt must result in acquittal. Burden never shifts to accused to prove innocence.

## *Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus*

False in one thing, false in everything

If a witness is found to have lied about one material fact, their entire testimony may be discredited.

Application:

Used to assess witness credibility. However, courts don't automatically reject all testimony—they examine each part carefully. Minor inconsistencies may not discredit entire testimony.

## *Ne bis in idem / Autrefois acquit / Autrefois convict*

Not twice for the same / Previously acquitted / Previously convicted

A person cannot be tried twice for the same offense. Also known as double jeopardy.

Application:

Enshrined in Article 20(2) of Indian Constitution. Once acquitted or convicted, person cannot be prosecuted again for same offense.

Protects against harassment.

## *Mala in se*

Wrong in itself

Acts that are inherently evil or immoral (murder, theft, rape). These are crimes regardless of whether there's a law against them.

Application:

Distinguished from mala prohibita (wrong because prohibited). Mala in se crimes are universally condemned and reflect fundamental moral principles.

## *Mala prohibita*

Wrong because prohibited

Acts that are crimes only because law prohibits them, not because they're inherently immoral (traffic violations, licensing requirements).

Application:

These acts become crimes through legislation. Not inherently evil but criminalized for public welfare or regulatory purposes.

## *Corpus delicti*

Body of the crime

The essential elements that prove a crime was committed. Not necessarily a physical body but evidence that the crime occurred.

Application:



Prosecution must prove corpus delicti independently of confession. A person cannot be convicted solely on confession without evidence that crime occurred.

## *Ignorantia facti excusat*

Ignorance of fact excuses

A genuine mistake about a fact can excuse criminal liability if the mistake negates the required mental element of the crime .

Application:

Unlike ignorance of law, mistake of fact can be a defense. Example: Taking someone else's umbrella believing it's yours is not theft due to lack of mens rea.

# Evidence Law

## *Onus probandi*

### Burden of proof

The obligation to prove one's assertion or claim. The party making a positive assertion has the duty to prove it.

#### Application:

In criminal cases, burden is on prosecution. In civil cases, plaintiff bears burden. Burden can shift based on evidence presented.

## *Res judicata*

### A matter already judged



Once a court of competent jurisdiction has decided a matter, the same parties cannot re-litigate the same issue.

#### Application:

Prevents endless litigation on same issues. Promotes finality of judgments. Exceptions: fraud, lack of jurisdiction, or new evidence.

## *Res inter alios acta alteri nocere non debet*

A transaction between others ought not to operate to the disadvantage of one not a party to it

A judgment or agreement between parties A and B cannot be used against party C who was not involved.

Application:

Judgments bind only parties to the case. Third parties cannot be prejudiced by decisions made without their participation.

## *Testimonia ponderanda sunt, non numeranda*

Evidence is to be weighed, not counted

Quality of evidence matters more than quantity. One credible witness is worth more than many unreliable ones.



Application:

Courts assess witness credibility and evidence quality. A single trustworthy eyewitness can outweigh multiple questionable witnesses.

## *Quod contra rationem juris receptum est, non est producendum ad consequentias*

What has been admitted contrary to the reason of the law ought not to be drawn into a precedent

Bad or illogical precedents should not be followed or extended. Courts should not perpetuate legal errors.

### Application:

Courts can decline to follow precedents that are clearly wrong or based on faulty reasoning. Supports judicial flexibility.

## *Confessio est regina probationum*

Confession is the queen of evidence

A voluntary confession is considered the strongest form of evidence. However, it must be free, voluntary, and corroborated.

### Application:

Confessions made to police are generally inadmissible. Must be made to magistrate. Confession alone insufficient without corpus delicti.

## *Praesumptio fortior lege*

Presumption is stronger than law

Legal presumptions carry significant weight and can determine outcomes unless rebutted by contrary evidence.

### Application:

Certain facts are presumed (legitimacy of child, validity of official acts). Party challenging presumption bears burden of proof.



## *Impotentia excusat legem*

Impossibility excuses from obeying the law

When compliance with law becomes impossible through no fault of the party, they are excused from non-compliance.

Application:

Used as defense when performance becomes impossible due to unforeseen circumstances beyond control (acts of God, war, etc.).

## *Quod non appetat non est*

What does not appear does not exist

If something is not recorded or documented, it is legally considered not to have occurred. There record is the truth .

Application:



Court records are conclusive. If something is not in the official record, courts cannot consider it. Emphasizes importance of proper documentation.

## *Nemo debet bis vexari pro una et eadem causa*

No one ought to be vexed twice for the same cause

Similar to res judicata. Once a matter is finally decided, parties should not be harassed by repeated litigation on the same issue .

Application:

Promotes finality and prevents abuse of process. Once case is decided with finality, same parties cannot relitigate same issues.

# Legal Interpretation & Procedure

## *Casus omissus*

A case omitted

A situation not covered by statute or law. When law is silent on a matter, courts cannot create law to fill the gap.

### Application:

Courts cannot legislate. If statute doesn't cover a situation, courts must apply it as written. Legislature must amend law to cover omitted cases.

## *Generalia specialibus non derogant*

General things do not derogate from specific things

When there's conflict between general and specific provisions, the specific provision prevails. Special law overrides general law.

### Application:

Used in statutory interpretation. If both general and specific laws apply, specific law governs. Example: Special Act prevails over general Code.

## *Lex posterior derogat priori*

Later law repeals earlier law

When two laws conflict, the later one prevails. New legislation supersedes older legislation on the same subject.

Application:

Resolves conflicts between statutes enacted at different times.

Assumes legislature intended to change the law by enacting newer provision.

## *Noscitur a sociis*

A word is known by the company it keeps

The meaning of ambiguous words in a statute should be determined by reference to words associated with it.

Application:



Tool for statutory interpretation. A word's meaning is influenced by surrounding words. Helps resolve ambiguity by examining context.

## *Eiusdem generis*

Of the same kind

When general words follow specific words in a statute, the general words are limited to things of the same kind as those specifically mentioned.

Application:

Example: "dogs, cats, and other animals" would include only domestic pets, not wild animals. Limits scope of general terms.



## *Reddendo singula singulis*

Referring each to each / Distributing words to their appropriate referents

When a statute contains several words followed by several phrases, each word should be connected to its corresponding phrase.

Application:

Used to match subjects with predicates in complex sentences.  
Prevents misinterpretation by properly associating related clauses.

## *Ut res magis valeat quam pereat*

It is better for a thing to have effect than to be void

Courts should interpret laws and documents in a way that makes them valid and effective rather than void or meaningless.



Application:

Courts prefer interpretations that give effect to legislative intent. If two interpretations possible, one validating and one invalidating, courts choose the validating interpretation.

## *Contemporanea expositio est optima et fortissima in lege*

Contemporary exposition is the best and strongest in law

The interpretation placed on a statute at or near the time of its enactment is most authoritative.

Application:

Historical context and legislative intent at time of enactment guide interpretation. Early judicial interpretations carry significant weight.

## *Equity follows the law / Aequitas sequitur legem*

Equity follows the law

Equitable principles supplement legal rules but do not override them. Courts of equity must respect established legal principles.

Application:

While courts can apply equitable principles for fairness, they cannot contradict clear legal provisions. Equity fills gaps but doesn't override law.



## *Delegatus non potest delegare*

A delegate cannot delegate

A person to whom powers are delegated cannot further delegate those powers to another unless expressly authorized to do so.

Application:

Prevents unauthorized sub-delegation of authority. Ensures powers are exercised by intended person/body. Exceptions exist when expressly permitted by law.

## Miscellaneous Important Maxims

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### *De minimis non curat lex*



The law does not concern itself with trifles

Law does not take notice of very minor or trivial matters. Courts will not waste time on insignificant issues.

Application:

Minor technical violations that cause no real harm may be overlooked. Courts focus on substantial justice rather than procedural minutiae.

## *Salus populi est suprema lex*

The welfare of the people is the supreme law

Public welfare and safety take precedence over individual rights when necessary. The good of society is paramount.

### Application:

Justifies public health measures, emergency powers, eminent domain. However, must be balanced with individual rights and not used arbitrarily.

## *Fiat justitia ruat caelum*

Let justice be done though the heavens fall

Justice must be administered regardless of consequences. Courts must apply law fairly even if results are unpopular or inconvenient.

### Application:

Emphasizes judicial independence and integrity. Justice cannot be compromised for expediency or popular opinion.



## *Interest reipublicae ut sit nis litium*

It is in the interest of the state that there be an end to litigation

Legal disputes should be resolved with finality. Endless litigation harms public interest and judicial efficiency.

Application:

Supports principles like res judicata, limitation periods, and doctrines promoting finality. Encourages settlement and prevents perpetual litigation.

## *Lex non cogit ad impossibilia*

The law does not compel the impossible

Law does not require anyone to do something impossible. Legal obligations must be capable of performance.

Application:

Defense when performance becomes impossible. Courts will not enforce obligations that cannot physically or legally be performed.

## *Cessante ratione legis cessat ipsa lex*

When the reason for a law ceases, the law itself ceases

If the purpose or justification for a law no longer exists, the law may become obsolete or should not be applied.

Application:

Used to argue that outdated laws should not be enforced. However, only legislature can formally repeal laws, not courts.



## *Judicis est jus dicere, non dare*

It is the duty of a judge to declare the law, not to make it

Judges interpret and apply existing law but do not create new law.  
Legislative function belongs to Parliament/Legislature.

### Application:

Principle of separation of powers. Judges cannot legislate, though judicial interpretation can clarify and develop law within existing framework.

## *Ex debito justitiae*

As a matter of right / As a debt of justice

Something to which a person is entitled as a matter of right, not as a discretionary favor.



### Application:

Distinguishes between rights and privileges. Remedies available ex debito justitiae must be granted if legal requirements are met.

## *Quando lex aliquid alicui concedit, concedere videtur et id sine quo res ipsa esse non potest*

When law gives anything to anyone, it gives also all those things without which the thing itself would be unavailable

Granting a power implicitly includes all necessary means to exercise that power effectively.

### Application:

Powers include implied ancillary powers necessary for their exercise.  
Right to do something includes right to means of doing it.

## *Ratio decidendi*

The reason for deciding

The legal principle or rule that forms the basis of a court's decision.  
This creates binding precedent for future cases.

### Application:

Only ratio decidendi is binding as precedent. Obiter dicta (remarks made in passing) are persuasive but not binding.

## *Obiter dicta / Obiter dictum*

Things said by the way

Statements or remarks made by a judge that are not essential to the decision. They are observations made in passing.

### Application:

Obiter dicta are not binding precedent but may be persuasive. Courts can consider them but are not obligated to follow them.



## *Stare decisis*

To stand by things decided

Courts should follow precedents set by higher courts. Previous decisions on similar cases should guide current decisions.

Application:

Foundation of common law system. Ensures consistency and predictability. Lower courts must follow higher court decisions. Courts of equal level should generally follow each other.

## *Prima facie*

At first sight / On the face of it

Evidence that is sufficient to prove something unless rebutted. Appears to be true based on initial impression.



Application:

Prima facie case means there's enough evidence to proceed. Burden then shifts to other party to rebut or explain.

## *Mutatis mutandis*

With necessary changes being made / The necessary changes having been made

A principle or rule from one situation applies to another situation with appropriate modifications.

Application:

Often used when one statutory provision is made applicable to another situation with necessary adaptations.



## *Ultra vires*

Beyond powers

An act done beyond the legal authority or powers granted to an entity. Such acts are void and unenforceable.

Application:

Used to challenge actions of corporations, government bodies, or officials who exceed their lawful authority. Basis for judicial review.

## *Ipsa facto*

By the fact itself / By that very fact

Something that is true or happens as an automatic consequence of another fact .

Application:



Used when one event automatically results in another without need for further action. Example: Certain convictions ipso facto disqualify a person from holding office.

## *Ab initio*

From the beginning

Something that is void ab initio was invalid from the very start, not just from when it was declared void .

Application:

Void ab initio contracts or laws are treated as if they never existed. Distinguished from voidable acts which are valid until set aside.

## *Bona de*

In good faith

An action done honestly, without fraud or deceit, and with sincere intention.

Application:

Bona fide purchasers for value get protection. Good faith is required in many contractual dealings. Opposite is mala fide (in bad faith).

## *Malade*

In bad faith

An action done dishonestly, with intent to deceive or defraud, or with improper motive.

Application:



Mala fide acts lack legal protection. Actions done in bad faith can be set aside. Intent to deceive or harm negates good faith defense.

## *Lis pendens*

Suit pending

A pending lawsuit over property that is subject of ongoing litigation cannot be transferred without court permission.

Application:

Section 52 of Transfer of Property Act. During pendency of suit regarding property, transfer is subject to the final decree. Protects rights of litigants.



## *Locus standi*

Place of standing / Right to appear

The right or capacity to bring a legal action or appear in court. Must have sufficient interest in the matter.

Application:

To file a case, one must have locus standi. In PIL, requirement is relaxed for genuine public interest matters. Prevents busybody litigation.

## *Per se*

By itself / In itself

Something that is inherently so, without need for further proof or qualification.



Application:

Used when something is illegal or wrong in itself. Example: Certain trade practices are anti-competitive per se, regardless of intent or effect.

## *Status quo / Status quo ante*

The existing state / The state in which things were before

Status quo is the current situation. Status quo ante is the situation as it existed before a particular event.

Application:

Courts often order maintenance of status quo to prevent changes pending litigation. Status quo ante aims to restore previous position.

## *Suo motu / Suo moto*

On its own motion

Action taken by a court on its own initiative without being prompted by any party.

Application:

Courts can take suo motu cognizance of serious matters, especially contempt or public interest issues. Shows active judicial role.

## *Functus officio*

Having performed one's office / Duty done

When a court or official has completed their assigned task, they lose authority to act further in that matter .

Application:



Once judgment is delivered and signed, court becomes functus officio and cannot alter it (except for clerical errors). Ensures finality.



## About CLAT Tribe

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*"The life of the law has not been logic; it has been experience."*

— Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.

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