

# Competitive Exams: Political Science Study Material: Glossary

## A

### Political Science Glossary: A

#### Abdication

If a King or a ruler voluntarily surrenders his throne or seat of the power to his successors, it is called an act of abdication.

#### Adjournment Motion

The Legislature carries on its business according to the given agenda, but a matter of urgent public importance can be brought before the Legislature and discussed through Adjournment Motion by interrupting its regular business. An Adjournment Motion should be supported by not less than 50 members of the House for being accepted. If accepted, it results in the holding the ongoing business of the House and discussing the matter raised in the Adjournment Motion. The basic idea behind this motion is to give an opportunity to the House to discuss a matter of urgent public importance. The matter should be of definite nature and should have factual basis. The discussion on the matter takes place at 1600 hours and continues for two and half hours. At the end of the discussion, voting takes place. Since voting exposes the Government's strength in the House, the ruling party tries not to allow the acceptance of the Adjournment Motion in the House.

#### Administrative Law

Administrative law is the legal code, or set of rules and precedents, governing relations between the individual citizen and the state. Many such interactions, for example a contractual dispute between the administration and a company supplying it service, naturally fall within ordinary civil law but even in cases like this there may be special rules that would not apply in a conflict between two private

companies. The extent to which administrative law is distinct from national civil law, and the mechanisms for handling disputes vary widely. It is important to distinguish between administrative law and constitutional law because the former never deals with the legitimacy of legislation per se, but with that of administrative acts carried out under legislation.

## Adult Franchise

In democratic countries, all the adult citizens of certain age without any distinctions of caste, creed, colour, religion or sex are given the right to vote. This is called an adult franchise. The prescribed minimum age for the citizens to avail the voting right may differ from country to country. For example, it is 18 years in the USA and Russia. The minimum age has been reduced in India from 21 years to 18 years by the 61st Constitutional Amendment. The assumption behind prescribing the minimum age is that after this age a person gets discretionary capacity to exercise his/her vote in a prudent manner. In a way the adult franchise is also a universal franchise as there is no distinction with respect to giving the voting rights to all the adult citizens.

## Amnesty

Amnesty refers to a condition when the Government grants pardon, in general way, to criminals and imprisoned and they are absolved of criminal accusations. In most of the cases, Amnesty is granted to the political prisoners. Anarchism

There are political thinkers who advocate the view that the State, the Government, law or any organized authority stifles the individual liberty and thus are obstacles in the free development of the individual and the society. Thus, they support a view of society where there will be no State, no Government or no organized authority at all. The emerging situation is similar to

## Anarchy

anarchy. This set of ideas is referred to as Anarchism. The Anarchism is of two types. First in which the future society is established through violent means and the second in which only peaceful means are accepted to establish such society. Mahatma Gandhi is known as a 'Philosophical Anarchist'

In literal terms, this refers to a situation where there is no Government worth the name or there is not the rule of law. Consequently, lawlessness, disorder or anarchy prevails. In the society, might becomes right and the weak suffers. Apartheid

Apartheid was the official doctrine of the South African government, and the ruling National Party, between 1948 and 1991. Meaning 'separateness' it was in practice nothing more than an excuse for domination by the white minority population of blacks and 'coloureds' The word 'coloured' is used here in the South African legal sense as someone who cannot be classified as black, but is not 'purely' white. Apartheid consisted of a set of legal inequalities.

Arbitration

Arbitration is a method of conflict resolution which, with more or less formalized mechanisms, occurs in many political and legal spheres. There are two main characteristics to arbitration. The first is that it is a voluntary process under which two parties in conflict agree between themselves to be bound by the judgement of a third party which has no other authority over them; the judgement, however, is not legally binding. The second is that there is usually no clear body of law or set of rules that must apply; the arbitrator is free, subject to any prior agreement with the conflicting parties, to decide on whatever basis of justice is deemed suitable.

Armistice

Armistice refers to a situation of agreement between two or more nations who were at war. In armistice, two parties which are in the condition of hostility or war arrive at an agreement to end the hostility to engage in mutual exchange of ideas and viewpoint. The term 'ceasefire' differs from armistice in the sense that the former is temporary and includes only the

end of military hostilities following war or aggression, whereas the latter is a peace agreement between the two nations.

### Authority

Authority means the right to give an order, which will be obeyed with no question as to that right, or, if not an order, the right to evoke legitimate power in support of a decision. Thus someone may have the authority to instruct soldiers to fire on a crowd, the authority to sign a binding legal document, or the authority to pass a security perimeter or frontier.

### Autonomy

Autonomy is a status of a unit or a province in relation to the whole or the central authority, where the unit enjoys the scope and authority to the extent that it can manage its internal affairs on its own without any outside interference.

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