

Glossary

The definitions for words are as they are used in the chapters.

abolitionist: a person who tried to end the practice of slavery
abrasive: smoothing out a rough surface
absentee ballot: a ballot that can be mailed in
adamant: having a strong opinion
adversary: someone who is against someone else; an opponent
affluence: having a lot of money
aghast: struck with amazement or horror; shocked
agribusiness: the business of making money by growing crops and raising animals
amendment: an addition or change to a constitution
animism: a belief that both living and non-living things have spirits
aquifer: a layer of rock that holds water
ardent: with much feeling
arid: very dry
barter: to trade without the use of money
basalt: gray or black fine-grained igneous rock; cooled lava rock
bill: a written idea for a law submitted to the legislature
bounty: money paid to a person for killing certain animals
breach: to make a gap or break, such as in the walls of a dam
cache: a large supply hidden from view
capital: money and goods needed to start a business
capitalism: an economic system where land and businesses are owned and run by citizens, not the government
capitalist: a person of wealth; a person who supports private ownership of land and business
cataracts: large waterfalls over steep cliffs
Caucasian: of European ancestry; non-Indian and non-African
censorship: the action of examining publications for objectionable statements
 checks and balances: a system that limits the power of any one branch of government

civilian: not in the military
clear-cut: a place where all of the trees have been cut down
coerce: to force
commercial: having to do with selling
commodity: any useful thing that is bought or sold; products of agriculture, mining, or manufacturing
communism: a system where land and businesses are owned and run by the government
compound interest: interest that is figured on both the original amount of the loan plus accrued interest
compromise: an agreement where both sides give up part of what they want to solve a conflict
condensed milk: milk from which part of the water has been removed; canned milk
confluence: the flowing together of two or more streams
conservation: a careful preservation and protection of something, especially land and natural resources
conspiracy: a plot or secret agreement to do an unlawful or wrongful act
continental drift: the theory that the earth's continents were one land mass and then drifted apart
cooperative: an organization owned and operated for the benefit of those using its services
coroner: a person who investigates unusual deaths
corporation: a group of people authorized by law to invest money to start or run a business
coulée: a dry streambed; a small shallow ravine
credit card: a card that authorizes purchases on credit and accumulates interest
debit card: a card where the cost of purchases will be subtracted from a bank balance without incurring interest
decade: a period of ten years
decimate: to kill a large number of the population
decompose: to decay or rot
deficient: not having enough
 degradation: the decline or ruin of
delude: to mislead or trick someone
deluge: a heavy rain

dentalium shells: long thin seashells worn as jewelry and used for trade by Native Americans
derogatory: uncomplimentary; belittling
desecrate: to treat with lack of respect
destitute: with almost no means of financial support; without the necessities of life
dilapidated: run down, shabby, or out of repair
domestic arts: skills relating to housework; cleaning, cooking, sewing
domestic servant: a person who does housework
dormant: temporarily inactive
down payment: the money given at the time a loan is arranged
ecology: the study of the interrelation of animals and plants with their environment
economics: the making, buying, and selling of goods and services
ecosystem: a community of living things that interact and depend on each other
electors: people selected to vote (for president)
elusive: hidden from view
entrepreneur: a person who starts and runs a business
erratic: a huge boulder carried long distances by a glacier
evacuate: to leave
executive branch: the branch of government that carries out the laws
exodus: a mass departure
exploit: to use to an unfair advantage
exports: goods shipped out for sale
fastidious: having high standards
fault lines: break in the earth's crust with displacement of earth and rock on one side
federal government: the level of government for all the United States
feminism: having to do with women's issues and rights
finite: having definite limits
fissure: a long crack in the earth's crust
fjord: a narrow inlet of the sea between steep cliffs
forensic anthropologist: a person who determines the cause of death of ancient humans
formidable: causing fear or dread

fraud: deceit, especially to get someone to part with something of value

free enterprise: an economic system where citizens own and control most production, buying, and selling

geography: the study of the earth and the location and activities of the people, plants, and animals living on it

geologic time: the long time period of the earth's history as defined by scientists

geologist: a scientist who studies rock and land formations to learn the history of the earth

goods: items that are made, bought, and sold

grade (roads): to smooth out the ground to make a road

groundwater: water that is naturally in the ground

habitat: the place where a plant or animal lives

headwaters: where a river starts

heavy metals: lead, zinc, cadmium, and arsenic

hinterland: land isolated from other places by distance and access

human characteristics: land features made by people

humane: having compassion or consideration

hydroelectric: relating to electricity produced by water-powered generators

igneous rock: rock that came from the interior of the earth as lava

immortal: exempt from death; living forever

immunity: resistance to disease

incense: to make very upset and angry

industrial arts: skills relating to industry; carpentry and the use of machines

inferior: of lower quality or importance

infirmity: a place where the sick are taken care of

inflation: a rise in the general price level of goods and services

initiative: a process by which citizens can write a bill and get it on the ballot for the voters to pass or defeat

insatiable: not able to get enough

irony: a result or outcome opposite of

what was expected

judicial branch: the branch of government that interprets the law and determines punishment

Kanaka: a Hawaiian man

lahar: huge mudflow filled of volcanic debris, rock, and water

leach: to seep or pass down through the soil

legislative branch: the branch of government that makes the laws

legislators: members of Congress; men and women who are elected to make laws

libel: a statement that defames or ruins another person's character

lobbyist: a person who studies issues and works to get legislators to vote for or against bills

loess: soil believed to be mainly deposited by wind

longshoremen: workers who load and unload ships

lucrative: producing wealth

mass transit: buses, trains, or subway systems that move large numbers of people at a time

materialism: an emphasis on material objects and comforts with a disinterest in cultural values.

median: the middle

menial: requiring little skill

migrant: a person who moves regularly to find work, especially in agriculture

minimum wage: the lowest amount of money a business can pay an employee

molten: melted by high heat, as in liquid rock

monopoly: when one company has exclusive ownership and control of a type of product

motley: a mixture of different or unusual people

municipal: of the city

negotiate: to talk to another person or group to settle a matter

Paleo-Indians: the first people who lived on the American continents

partnership: when two or more people own a business

per capita: per person

philanthropy: the generous giving of money to worthy causes

physical features: the natural landforms and characteristics of a place

placid: calm, smooth

political party: a group of people who have similar ideas about government

porcelain: the material ceramic dishes are made from

potlatch: a large celebration of feasting and gifts held to celebrate a special event

precinct: a voting region

primary election: the first election held to narrow down the list of candidates

proprietorship: when one person owns a business

protohistoric: when there was a drastic change in the lifestyle of the American Indians

radical: drastic, extreme

radioactive: having nuclear properties

ransom: money paid to get back someone who has been kidnapped

ration: a small supply given on a regular basis

reactor: a machine that produces nuclear energy

recall: to remove a person from public office

reclamation project: a large project, such as the building of a dam, whose purpose is to make better use of the land

referendum: a process by which legislative bills are put on the public ballot

relief (art): where a design is above the background

repatriate: to return artifacts to the place of origin

repeal: to cancel (a law) by official authority

representative: a person elected to make laws for the whole group

resurrect: to rejoin the spirit and the body

retail: having to do with selling in stores

retaliate: to fight back

revenue: money brought in from a sale

sabotage: the destruction of property or materials

salary: a set amount of money paid by the week or month

sanitation: relating to health, cleanliness, disposal of human waste

sedimentary rock: rock formed from

sand, soil, rocks, and shells
segregation: the separation of people, usually based on race or gender
semiarid: partly dry or dry much of the time
services: in economics, work people do to earn money
shaman: a Native American spiritual leader who healed the sick
shortage: when there is more demand than the supply of goods
sovereignty: self-rule; freedom from external control
spawn: to produce and deposit large numbers of eggs
spoils: goods taken from an enemy of war
strait: a narrow passageway of water that connects two large bodies of water
subsidy: money or land given by the government
subsistence: barely supporting life
suburb: a place where people live outside the city
suffrage: the right to vote
superior: of higher quality or importance
supply and demand: when both the amount of goods available and the number of buyers affect the price
suppress: to put down or to stop
surpass: to go beyond or go farther
surplus: goods left over after the demand is met
suspend: to cause to stop temporarily
tailings: what is left over after metals are separated from earth or rock
tectonics: a branch of geology concerned with the crust of the earth and its folds and faults
temperate: not extremely hot or cold
transient: a person who stays in a place briefly; a person who travels in search of work
tributaries: smaller streams and rivers that flow into a river
tule: bulrushes used by native Americans to make mats and houses
vengeance: punishment for an injury or offense
veteran: a person who has fought in war
veto: to officially turn down or reject a

bill to stop it from becoming a law
vigilante: a person who takes it upon himself to punish others
voyageur: a man who transported furs by canoe
vulnerable: easily harmed
wage: money paid to an employee by the hour
warehousemen: workers in a warehouse
weir: a type of fence across a stream that aids in catching fish
witness tree: a tree carved with lot numbers indicating that property was claimed

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