

# Key Terms in American History

- abolition**—the ending of legal slavery
- American Indian Movement (AIM)**—formed in 1968 to work for Native American rights
- Americanization movement**—education program designed to help immigrants assimilate to American culture
- anarchist**—a person who opposes all forms of government
- antebellum**—belonging to the period before the Civil War
- assimilation**—minority group's adaptation to the dominant culture
- atomic bomb**—bombs using a nuclear reaction to create widespread destruction; ended World War II
- Berlin airlift**—U.S. and Britain dropped supplies into West Berlin, blockaded by Soviets, 1948
- Berlin Wall**—prevented citizens from moving between East and West Berlin, 1961–1989.
- Bessemer process**—cheap, efficient way to make steel, developed c. 1850
- big stick diplomacy**—U.S. foreign policy of Pres. Theodore Roosevelt which used threats of military intervention to exert influence over other countries, especially in protecting U.S. interests in Latin America
- black codes**—laws, in Southern states after the Civil War, to limit rights of African Americans
- blacklist**—names of people barred from working in Hollywood because of alleged Communist connections
- Black Panthers**—militant political organization to combat police brutality and provide services in African-American ghettos, founded 1966
- Black Power**—slogan revived by Stokely Carmichael in the 1960s to encourage black pride and leadership
- Bleeding Kansas**—description of the antebellum Kansas Territory, due to conflict over slavery
- bootlegger**—smuggler of illegal alcoholic beverages during Prohibition
- boycott**—refusal to have economic relations with a person or group
- buying on margin**—purchasing stocks or bonds on credit
- capitalism**—economic system in which private individuals and corporations control the means of production and earn profit on them
- cash crop**—one grown for sale rather than personal use
- Cold War**—period of tension between U.S. and USSR, 1945–1989
- colonization**—establishment of outlying settlements by a parent country
- Columbian Exchange**—movement of plants, animals, and disease between the Americas and Europe after Columbus's voyage
- communism**—political and economic philosophy of one-party government and state ownership of property
- concentration camp**—prison camp operated by Nazi Germany in which Jews and other minorities were murdered or forced into slave labor
- confederation**—alliance of states or nations acting together for mutual benefit
- consumerism**—preoccupation with purchasing material goods
- containment**—blocking of a nation's attempt to spread its influence, especially attempts to spread communism after World War II
- counterculture**—American youth in the 1960s opposed to mainstream culture; based on peace, love, individual freedom
- D-Day**—Allied invasion of mainland Europe June 6, 1944
- debt peonage**—workers bound in servitude until debts are paid
- de facto segregation**—racial separation based on custom rather than law
- deficit spending**—government spending that exceeds revenue
- de jure segregation**—racial separation based on law
- demographic**—having to do with population
- depression**—very severe and prolonged contraction of economic activity
- dollar diplomacy**—U.S. foreign policy of using the nation's economic power to exert influence over other countries; use first associated with Pres. Taft
- domino theory**—belief that if one country falls to communism its neighbors will
- double standard**—granting greater sexual freedom to men than to women
- dove**—opponent of U.S. participation in Vietnam War
- draft**—legally required military service
- Dust Bowl**—areas of Colorado, New Mexico, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas hard-hit by drought and dust storms, 1930s
- electoral college**—group selected by states to elect president and vice-president; number of electors equals Congressional representation of each state
- emancipation**—freeing of slaves
- Enlightenment**—18th-century intellectual movement that emphasized the use of reason and the scientific method as means of obtaining knowledge
- environmentalist**—a person who works to protect the environment
- executive branch**—administers and enforces laws
- fascism**—political philosophy that advocates centralized dictatorial nationalistic government
- Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation**—created in 1933 to insure bank deposits against loss
- Federalist**—supporter of the Constitution and strong national government
- free enterprise**—economic system based on private property, free markets, and individuals making most economic decisions
- fundamentalism**—Protestant religious movement based on belief in literal truth of the Bible
- genocide**—deliberate and systematic extermination of a particular ethnic, national, or religious group

## Key Terms in American History *continued*

**Gentlemen's Agreement**—Japanese government agreed to limit emigration to the U.S., 1907–1908

**GI Bill of Rights**—1944 law that gave financial and education benefits to World War II veterans

**gold standard**—monetary system in which a country's currency is valued at a fixed sum of gold

**grandfather clause**—exempted Southern whites from the strict requirements applied to African-American voters

**Grange**—organization of farmers to combat power of railroads, late 19th century

**Great Awakening**—revival of religious feeling in the American colonies during the 1730s and 1750s

**Great Depression**—period lasting from 1929–1940 in which the U.S. economy was in severe decline and millions of Americans were unemployed

**Great Migration**—movement of African Americans to northern cities, early 20th century

**Great Plains**—grasslands extending through west-central U.S.

**Great Society**—President Johnson's program to end poverty and racial injustice, 1964–1968

**gross domestic product (GDP)**—market value of all goods and services produced in a country in a certain time period

**Harlem Renaissance**—flowering of African-American artistic creativity in the 1920s, centered in Harlem, New York City

**hawk**—supporter of U.S. participation in the Vietnam War

**Holocaust**—systematic murder of 11 million Jews and other people by the Nazis before and during World War II

**HUAC**—House Un-American Activities Committee; investigated alleged Communist influence in U.S. after World War II

**immigration**—movement of foreigners into a country

**impeach**—accuse a government official of serious offenses

**imperialism**—policy of extending national influence over other countries by political, economic, or military means

**income tax**—tax on individuals' earnings

**Indian Removal Act**—1830 law requiring Native Americans east of the Mississippi River to move to the West

**Industrial Revolution**—the change in society that occurred through replacing hand tools with machines and developing large-scale industry, late 19th–early 20th century

**inflation**—increase in prices or decline in purchasing power caused by an increase in the supply of money

**initiative**—a way for people rather than legislatures to originate laws

**installment plan**—buying over time with regular, periodic payments

**Internet**—worldwide computer network that allows almost instant communication of words, pictures, and sounds

**internment**—confinement or restriction of movement, especially under wartime conditions; used against Japanese Americans during World War II

**isolationist**—in opposition to political entanglements with other countries

**Jim Crow laws**—Southern laws that separated whites and blacks

**judicial branch**—interprets the laws and Constitution

**Korean War**—war between North (supported by China) and South (supported by U.S. and UN) Korea, 1950–1953

**Kristallnacht**—Nazi troops attacked Jewish homes, businesses, and synagogues in Germany November 9, 1938

**Ku Klux Klan**—secret white supremacist organization that terrorized African Americans during Reconstruction

**legislative branch**—makes laws

**Linotype machine**—keyboard-operated typesetting device

**literacy test**—reading test formerly used in the South to keep African Americans from voting

**Loyalist**—a colonist who supported the British government during the American Revolution

**Manhattan Project**—secret U.S. program to develop the atomic bomb during World War II

**manifest destiny**—19th-century belief that U.S. would inevitably spread to the Pacific Ocean and into Mexican territory

**mass media**—means of communication that reach large audiences, such as radio, television, newspapers

**McCarthyism**—making or threatening to make public accusations of disloyalty without offering evidence, as done by Senator Joseph McCarthy in the 1950s

**migration**—movement from one place to another within a country

**monopoly**—complete control of an industry by a single company

**moral diplomacy**—U.S. foreign policy used by Pres. Wilson to withhold support for any Latin American country which was oppressive, undemocratic, or hostile to U.S. interests

**NAACP**—National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, founded in 1909 to promote racial equality

**nationalism**—devotion to the interests and culture of one's nation

**nativism**—favoring the interests of native-born people over those of immigrants

**Nazism**—Hitler's political philosophy based on nationalism, racism, and military expansionism in 1930s Germany

**neutrality**—refusal to take sides in conflicts between other nations

**New Deal**—President Franklin Roosevelt's program to alleviate problems of the Great Depression

**New Frontier**—President John Kennedy's legislative program

**Nisei**—U.S. citizen born of immigrant Japanese parents

**nuclear freeze movement**—U.S. and international movement in 1980s to stop all testing, production, and deployment of nuclear weapons

**nullification**—a state's refusal to recognize an act of Congress it considers unconstitutional

**Open Door Policy**—U.S. request that China be open to trade with all countries

## Key Terms in American History *continued*

**Panama Canal**—artificial waterway built to facilitate travel between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, opened 1914

**Parliament**—England’s legislative body

**Patriot**—colonist who supported American independence from Britain

**plantation**—large farm where a single crop such as cotton is grown by slaves or other workers

**poll tax**—an annual tax formerly required of voters in some Southern states

**progressive movement**—early 20th-century reform movement focused on quality of life as well as business and government corruption

**prohibition**—banning of the manufacture, sale, and possession of alcoholic beverages

**Puritan**—committed to removing all trace of Roman Catholic ritual from the Church of England

**Radical Republican**—Reconstruction congressmen who favored full rights for African Americans and decreased power for former slave owners

**rationing**—limitation on the amount of certain goods people may buy, usually in wartime to insure enough for the military

**recall**—a way for people to remove public officials from office

**Reconstruction**—period of rebuilding after the Civil War, former Confederate states readmitted to the Union

**Red Scare**—fear of communist takeover of America in the 1920s

**referendum**—a way for a proposed law to be voted on by the people

**republic**—government in which citizens rule through elected representatives

**salutary neglect**—English policy of relaxed enforcement of laws in return for colonies’ continued loyalty

**Scopes trial**—1925 trial over the teaching of evolution in Tennessee

**Securities and Exchange Commission**—created in 1934 to monitor and regulate the stock and bond markets

**secession**—formal withdrawal of a state from the Union

**sectionalism**—placing regional interests above national interests

**segregation**—separation of people based on race

**settlement house**—community center providing assistance to residents, especially immigrants, of slum neighborhood

**sharecropping**—landowners give farmers land, seed, and tools in exchange for part of the crops raised

**sit-in**—civil rights protest demonstration, sitting down in a business and refusing to leave until served

**states’ rights**—belief that rights of individual states take priority over laws of the national government

**Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee**—formed in 1960 to give younger blacks a greater role in the civil rights movement

**Social Darwinism**—application of Charles Darwin’s natural philosophy of survival of the fittest to support unlimited business competition

**Social Gospel movement**—19th-century reform movement based on the belief that Christians have a responsibility to help improve working conditions and alleviate poverty

**Social Security Act**—1935, provided aid to retirees, unemployed, disabled, and dependent mothers and children

**socialism**—economic and political system of limited government ownership of business and property and equal distribution of wealth

**Southern Christian Leadership Conference**—formed in 1957 by Martin Luther King, Jr., and others to achieve racial equality through nonviolence

**speakeasy**—covert tavern in which alcoholic beverages were sold and drunk illegally during Prohibition

**speculation**—risky business practices in the hope of making a quick or large profit

**standard of living**—overall economic situation in which people live

**stock market**—where stocks and bonds are bought and sold

**suburb**—a residential community near a city

**suffrage**—the right to vote

**tariff**—a fee charged on goods brought into one place from another

**temperance movement**—organized effort to prevent drinking of alcohol

**Trail of Tears**—route of forced Cherokee evacuation from Georgia, 1838

**trust**—consolidation of competing companies into one large corporation

**unalienable rights**—natural rights which cannot be taken away by any government; Declaration of Independence lists them as “Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness”

**urban flight**—migration of people from cities to suburbs

**urbanization**—growth of cities

**urban sprawl**—unplanned and uncontrolled spreading of cities into surrounding regions

**USS *Maine***—warship that exploded and sank in Havana harbor, February, 1898

**Vietcong**—South Vietnamese communists who fought against the government of South Vietnam, aided by North Vietnam, 1957–1975

**Vietnamization**—process of replacing U.S. troops in Vietnam with South Vietnamese troops; Nixon’s strategy for ending U.S. involvement

**Watergate**—scandal involving the Nixon administration’s attempt to cover up the 1972 break-in at Democratic National Committee headquarters

**Woodstock**—free music festival attracting 400,000 young people to upstate New York, 1969