



# GLOSSARY

Definitions given here are for the Words to Understand as they are used in this textbook.  
The words are listed on the opening page of each chapter and are highlighted in the chapter text.

## A

**abandon:** to leave completely and finally; to desert  
**adaptation:** changes by a species to improve its chances of survival  
**administrator:** a person who manages a business  
**aerospace:** the industry concerned with manufacturing aircraft and spacecraft  
**amendment:** an addition to a bill or constitution  
**animosity:** bitter hostility; active hatred  
**archaeologist:** a scientist who studies prehistoric people and their cultures  
**arid:** being without moisture; extremely dry  
**artifact:** any handmade object from an earlier time

## B

**bankrupt:** a state of being unable to satisfy financial obligations  
**barter:** to trade by exchanging goods or services instead of money  
**basin:** a wide, bowl-shaped area of the earth's surface  
**bill:** a written proposal for a law  
**bowery:** a shaded place for holding meetings  
**brutality:** the act of being ruthless and extremely cruel

## C

**cache:** a hiding place in the ground  
**cash crop:** products grown or raised to be sold for cash  
**cataract:** a furious rush of river water  
**cholera:** an infectious disease caused by contaminated water or food  
**civilian:** a person who is not part of the military  
**climate:** the weather pattern over a period of many years  
**colonize:** to establish a community; to settle  
**commercial:** relating to business and profit  
**commodity:** any product of agriculture or mining that is shipped to be sold  
**communal:** used or shared in common by everyone in a group

**communism:** a form of government in which the government owns the property and controls the economy  
**compensation:** money given as an equivalent for loss or services  
**comply:** to act according to requests, demands, or conditions  
**compress:** to make more compact by pressing  
**compromise:** a settlement of differences by sacrifice on both sides  
**confiscate:** to seize as if or by authority  
**consumption:** the utilization of goods in satisfaction of economic wants  
**contempt:** regarding someone or something as inferior or with scorn  
**controversy:** a prolonged public dispute, debate, or argument  
**convert:** a person who has adopted a religion  
**cooperative:** a joint business venture where owners share the risks and benefits  
**culture:** the beliefs, arts, and lifestyle of a group

## D

**defendant:** the person against whom a charge is brought in court  
**delegate:** a person chosen to act for or to represent others  
**democratic:** of or for the people; especially rule by the majority  
**depression:** a period during which business, employment, and stock market values remain at a low level of activity  
**descendant:** a child, grandchild, great-grandchild, etc.  
**desolate:** barren; deserted  
**devastated:** made miserable; overwhelmed  
**dictate:** an authoritative order or command  
**dictator:** a ruler who has absolute, unrestricted control in government  
**disdain:** to look upon with contempt or disgust  
**diverse:** differing from one another  
**domestic:** relating to animals that have been tamed and raised by people

## E

**economics:** the analysis of the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services  
**emigrant:** a person who moves out of a state or country  
**employee:** a person who works for a business for pay  
**entrepreneur:** a person who takes a risk to start and run a business  
**era:** a major division of geologic time composed of a number of periods  
**erosion:** the wearing away of the earth's surface by water, glaciers, and wind  
**establish:** to bring about permanently  
**ethnocentricity:** the belief in the superiority of one's own culture  
**excavation:** the digging site of an archaeological exploration  
**exodus:** the departure or emigration of a large group of people at the same time  
**export:** to ship or send out of a state or country  
**extermination:** complete destruction of

## F-G

**fault:** a fracture in the earth's surface  
**fossil fuel:** fuel such as petroleum, coal, or natural gas that was formed from living matter of a previous geologic time  
**fracture:** a broken surface or crack  
**freight:** goods or cargo transported for pay  
**geography:** the study of the earth's physical features and how people and places affect each other  
**geologist:** a scientist who studies the history of the earth as recorded in rock  
**glean:** to gather (grain, etc.) after the main harvest

## H-I-J

**harass:** to torment by repeated attacks  
**hybrid:** the offspring of two animals or plants of different breeds or species  
**immigrant:** a person who moves into a state or country  
**immunity:** a condition of being able to resist a certain disease

**inauguration:** a ceremonial induction into office  
**indigenous:** native or natural to the state  
**infer:** to conclude from facts or premises  
**inferno:** a place that resembles a hot, fiery hell  
**influenza:** a contagious viral infection characterized by fever, chills, and muscular pain  
**intercept:** to interrupt or receive a communication directed elsewhere  
**irrigation:** the artificial watering of land to help in the production of crops  
**isolate:** to separate from other people  
**junction:** a place or point where two roads or tracks meet  
**jury:** a group of people who are legally sworn to give a verdict according to evidence

## L-M-N

**labor union:** workers who join together to bargain with management for higher wages and better working conditions  
**landform:** a natural feature of the earth's surface  
**legislature:** an elected body having the authority to make laws  
**libel:** the malicious publication of untruths in order to harm a person or group  
**martyr:** a person who is killed because of his or her religion  
**massacre:** the killing of a large number of people  
**migration:** the mass movement of people from one locality to another  
**morality:** a strong sense of right or virtuous actions  
**natural resource:** water, forests, minerals, stone, soil, etc., that occur in nature and have economic value  
**naturalization:** the act of receiving the rights of a nation, especially citizenship  
**nondenominational:** not restricted to any one religion

## O-P-Q

**oppressed:** burdened with unfair restraints  
**ordinance:** a local law or rule  
**ore:** a metal that can be mined for profit  
**organic:** pertaining to the remains of living animals or plants

**passive:** not participating actively  
**pelt:** an animal skin with the fur still on it  
**perpetuate:** to cause to continue indefinitely  
**persecute:** to harass with ill-treatment, especially because of race, religion, or beliefs  
**petition:** a formal request  
**philanthropic:** relating to generous donations of money for human welfare  
**pioneer:** a person who is among those who first enter or settle a region  
**plagued:** troubled; annoyed  
**plateau:** a high, wide, flat landform  
**polygamy:** having more than one wife at a time  
**preamble:** the introductory statement of a constitution  
**prehistoric:** pertaining to the time before recorded history  
**presideo:** a Spanish military post built to protect settlers and Catholic priests from Indian attack  
**processed food:** food changed or combined to make a new product  
**progressive:** favoring improvement or reform  
**propose:** to offer or suggest  
**prospect:** to search for or explore for mineral deposits  
**quarry:** an excavation, usually open to the air, from which building stone is obtained

## R

**ratify:** to give official approval  
**rebellious:** resisting established authority or tradition  
**reclamation:** the reclaiming of wasteland for cultivation or other use  
**refugee:** a person who flees a country to escape danger  
**regulate:** to control according to rule or law  
**remnant:** remaining; leftover; a trace  
**rendezvous:** a gathering place where trappers sold furs, bought supplies, and socialized  
**renewable:** capable of being renewed or replaced  
**repeal:** to officially revoke or withdraw  
**replenish:** to replace or make complete again  
**representative:** an elected person who votes or acts on behalf of others

**republic:** a state in which supreme power rests in the hands of the people  
**reservation:** a tract of land set aside by the government for the use of an Indian tribe  
**retaliate:** to attack or assault in return for a similar attack  
**retire:** to withdraw from office or business, usually because of age  
**retrieve:** to recover or regain  
**revival:** an awakening of interest in religion  
**ruthless:** without pity or compassion; cruel

## S

**sediment:** mineral or organic matter deposited by water, air, or ice  
**sedimentary rock:** rock formed by the deposit of mineral or organic matter  
**self-sufficient:** able to supply one's own needs  
**serene:** calm, peaceful, or tranquil  
**skirmish:** a brisk conflict or encounter  
**smelter:** a place where metal is separated from rock, usually by heat  
**sovereignty:** self-government  
**sparse:** thinly scattered; not thick or dense  
**strikebreaker:** one who works for a company during a strike  
**suffrage:** the right to vote in a political election  
**survey:** the act of determining the exact boundaries of a parcel of land  
**sustain:** to supply with food and other necessities of life

## T-U-V-W

**torment:** to cause great physical or mental suffering  
**tradition:** a long-established or inherited way of thinking or acting  
**treason:** the offense of attempting to overthrow one's government  
**tributary:** a river that flows into a larger river or other body of water  
**unemployment rate:** the percentage of the workforce that is not working at any given date  
**urban:** referring to a city or town  
**verdict:** the finding of a jury given to the court  
**watershed:** a region drained by streams or rivers