


Lesson Resources - Glossary Terms from "Colonial Discontent"

[Resources](#) > **Glossary Terms**

Glossary Terms from: 

Show As List

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abolition

the act of ending or abolishing something, such as slavery

Alexander Hamilton

first secretary of the treasury, leading Federalist, and proponent of a strong federal government

Anti-Federalists

opponents of the U.S. Constitution at the time when the states were contemplating its adoption

Articles of Confederation

the first government of the United States, adopted by Congress in 1777 and ratified in 1781. The Articles established the Continental Congress as the national legislature, but left most authority with state legislatures

Baron von Steuben

Prussian officer who trained and reorganized the Continental Army during the American Revolution

Battle of Bunker Hill

costly victory for British troops over the patriots in Charlestown, Massachusetts, in the American Revolution on June 17, 1775

Battle of Long Island

a 1776 battle in New York in which more than 1,400 colonists were killed, wounded, or captured

Battle of Saratoga

a 1777 battle in New York in which colonial forces won a decisive victory against the British

Battle of Trenton

a 1776 battle in New Jersey in which Continental forces surprised and defeated Hessian troops

Battle of Yorktown

the 1781 American victory in Virginia that forced the British to surrender

Battles of Lexington and Concord

in 1775, the conflicts between Massachusetts colonists and British soldiers that started the Revolutionary War

Benjamin Franklin

an author, inventor, and a statesman who helped persuade France to enter the Revolutionary War on the side of the Americans. He was actively involved in framing the Declaration of Independence.

bicameral

an adjective describing a legislative body composed of two chambers

Bill of Rights

fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed to U.S. citizens by the Constitution's first 10 amendments

blockade

to use troops or ships to cut off access to an enemy location

Boston Massacre

incident on March 5, 1770, in which British soldiers killed five colonists in Boston

Boston Tea Party

a 1773 protest in which colonists dressed as Native Americans dumped tea into Boston Harbor

boycott

to abstain from using or buying something as an act of protest

Charles Cornwallis

general who commanded Britain's southern forces and surrendered at Yorktown in 1783

Coercive Acts

British laws enacted in 1774 to punish Boston and the rest of Massachusetts for the destruction of tea during the Boston Tea Party; with Quebec Act, dubbed "Intolerable Acts" by colonists

Committees of Correspondence

groups of colonists formed in the 1770s to spread news and information about protests against the British

Common Sense

a pamphlet written by Thomas Paine that argued for independence from Great Britain

Confiscation Acts

statewide acts that made it legal for state governments to seize loyalists' property

Connecticut Plan/Great Compromise

plan proposed for creating a national bicameral legislature in which all states would be equally represented in the Senate and proportionally represented in the House

Constitutional Convention of 1787

the gathering of state delegates in Philadelphia in May 1787 to revise the Articles of Confederation, which were replaced with the Constitution

Continental Army

a regular fighting force organized by the Second Continental Congress and raised from all of the colonies

Currency Act

a 1764 British law that barred the colonies from issuing their own paper to pay public or private debts to Britain

Daughters of Liberty

a colonial women's group organized in 1766 as a counterpart to the Sons of Liberty to oppose British policies through boycotts of British goods and other measures

Declaration of Independence

a 1776 document stating that the 13 English colonies were a free and independent nation

Declaratory Act

a 1766 British law that repealed the Stamp Act of 1765 but said that Parliament could legislate for the colonies in "all cases whatsoever"

democracy

form of government in which citizens hold political power

Dunmore's Proclamation

decree signed by Lord Dunmore, the royal governor of Virginia, that proclaimed any slaves or indentured servants who fought alongside the British in the Revolutionary War would be rewarded with their freedom

duty

an import tax

Electoral College

a system in which each state selects presidential electors according to the number of its senators and representatives in Congress by whatever method it prefers, and these electors then select the president

Federalist Papers

a series of essays by Federalists James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay in support of ratifying the Constitution

Federalists

supporters of the U.S. Constitution at the time when the states were contemplating its adoption

First Continental Congress

meeting of delegates from most of the colonies held in Philadelphia in 1774 in response to British efforts to tax the colonies

George Washington

general of the Continental Army and first U.S. president

Hessians

German soldiers hired by Britain to fight in the American Revolution

homespun

yarn and cloth that is spun and woven at home

inoculate

to inject a weakened form of a disease into a person to protect against the illness

James Madison

renowned U.S. statesman and fourth president of the United States; often called the "father of the Constitution" for the major role he played at the Constitutional Convention of 1789, which framed the federal Constitution

John Adams

a leader in the American Revolution. He went on to serve as the first Vice President and second President of the United States

John Hancock

colonial leader, president of the Continental Congress, and signer of the Declaration of Independence

John Jay

fifth president of the Continental Congress and U.S. diplomat to Spain and France who helped negotiate the Treaty of Paris

John Locke

English philosopher whose ideas influenced the Declaration of Independence

loyalists

American colonists who remained loyal to Britain and opposed the war for independence

majority rule

the principle that the government follows the ideas supported by the greatest number of people

manumission

the act of releasing a slave from slavery or servitude

Marquis de Lafayette

a French aristocrat who fought with the patriots against the British during the American Revolution

mercenary

a soldier who is paid to fight for another country

militia

an army of citizen volunteers who train to fight during emergencies

minutemen

colonial militia volunteers who were prepared to fight at a minute's notice

Nathanael Greene

major general in the Continental Army who became commander in chief of the southern forces and helped trap the British at Yorktown

natural rights

rights inherent in human beings, not dependent on governments, which include life, liberty, and property; the concept of natural rights was central to English philosopher John Locke's theories about government and was widely accepted among America's founders

New Jersey Plan

plan that was presented as an alternative to the Virginia Plan at the Constitutional Convention; called for a unicameral legislature in which each state would be equally represented

Non-Importation Movement

a colonial effort launched in 1765 to avoid buying British goods in order to pressure the British Parliament to repeal taxes

Northwest Ordinance of 1787

legislation passed by Congress under the Articles of Confederation that provided for public schools and the sale of government land and prohibited slavery in the Northwest Territories

Patrick Henry

the first governor of the independent state of Virginia and a patriot leader during the American Revolution

patriots

American colonists who opposed British rule

Pontiac's Rebellion

an armed resistance in 1763 organized by Ottawa leader Pontiac among several Native American tribes that resulted in great loss of life; also known as Pontiac's War (original, based on OpenStax 5.1)

Proclamation Line of 1763

a royal proclamation in 1763 designed to protect Native American tribes by setting a boundary at the peaks of the Appalachian Mountains beyond which no western white settlement was to take place

propaganda

the use of ideas, including factual information or allegations, to further one's cause

Quartering Act

a 1765 British law requiring colonists to provide housing and provisions for British troops stationed in the colonies

republican motherhood

the belief that women should have more rights and a better education so that they might support husbands and raise sons who would actively participate in the political affairs of society

republicanism

form of government in which citizens appoint or elect leaders to represent and make decisions for them

Shays's Rebellion

a series of attacks on courthouses by a small band of farmers led by Revolutionary War captain Daniel Shays to block foreclosure proceedings

siege

a military blockade or encirclement of an enemy town or position with the purpose of forcing it to surrender

social contract

Enlightenment theory that says individuals form governments as a way to enforce laws and to protect rights; if the government violates the rights of the people, the people have the right to overthrow the government and form a new government

Sons of Liberty

a colonial organization formed in 1765 in opposition to the Stamp Act and other British laws and taxes

Stamp Act

law passed in 1765 by the British Parliament that imposed taxes on items such as newspapers and pamphlets in the American colonies; repealed in 1766

Stamp Act Congress

a formal meeting of representatives from nine of the 13 American colonies to discuss and coordinate a response to the Stamp Act of 1765

Sugar Act

a British law passed in 1764 that revised and enforced the tax on the sale of molasses, sugar, and other goods in the colonies, making it easier for British officials to bring colonial smugglers to trial

tariff

taxes on imports or exports

Tea Act

a law passed by British Parliament in 1773 stating that only the British East India Company could sell tea directly to the American colonies and permitting the company to bypass customs duties

Thomas Jefferson

author of the Declaration of Independence. Jefferson also served as minister to France and later as the third president of the United States.

Three-Fifths Compromise

an agreement reached at the Constitutional Convention that a slave would be counted as three-fifths of a person when counting the population of a state

Townshend Acts

laws passed by British Parliament in 1767 that taxed goods such as glass, paper, paint, lead, and tea imported by the American colonies

Treaty of Greenville

a treaty agreed to in 1795 in which Native Americans in the Northwest Territory were forced to cede the land that is most of the present states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin to the United States

Treaty of Paris

the treaty signed in 1783 ending the war between the United States and Great Britain

unicameral

an adjective describing a legislative body composed of one chamber

Valley Forge

the Pennsylvania site of Washington's Continental Army encampment during the winter of 1777–1778

Virginia Plan

plan presented by the delegates from Virginia at the Constitutional Convention; called for a three-branch government with a bicameral legislature in which each state's membership would be determined by its population or its financial support for the federal government

William Howe

general who served as commander in chief of the British forces in North America during the American Revolution