



# Glossary

**ANTEBELLUM:** Before the Civil War.

**BURGESS:** A representative in a colonial legislature.

**CLOTURE:** Closing off debate over proposed legislation.

**DEREGULATION:** The removal of government restrictions on an industry.

**DUE PROCESS:** A legal doctrine by which the government is required to recognize and respect the legal rights of individuals.

**ELECTORAL COLLEGE:** The body of representatives that elects the president and vice president in the United States.

**COMMON LAW:** A legal tradition, brought to America from English law, in which judges, rather than legislatures, establish legal rules.

**ENLIGHTENMENT:** A philosophical movement of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that celebrated reason and the rights of the common people. Enlightenment ideals strongly influenced the framers of the U.S. Constitution.

**FEDERALISM:** A system of dual government sovereignty, where authority is divided between a central, federal government, and various local, state governments.

**FREEMEN:** Residents of the colonies having the full rights of a citizen.

**GAG ORDER:** A court order prohibiting discussion of information related to a case.

**IMMUNITY:** Freedom from legal requirements or liabilities. Diplomats, legislators, and some other government officials are granted immunity from prosecution in certain situations, most often related to their official actions in government service.

**IMPERIALISM:** Extension of power by a government that acquires territory or gains political and economic control over other countries.

**IMPRESSMENT:** Forcing sailors into military service. The British Royal Navy impressed American citizens into the nineteenth century.

**INDENTURED SERVANT:** A worker bound to his or her employer for a specified period of time as repayment for travel expenses.

**ISOLATIONISM:** A U.S. governmental policy of avoiding commitments to or alliances with other countries

**JOINT STOCK COMPANY CHARTER:** A charter granted by the British Crown to a group of investors who pooled their resources to fund the establishment of a North American colony and shared in the profits.

**JUDICIAL REVIEW:** The power of the Supreme Court to review government actions and legislation to determine whether or not they are permitted under the Constitution.

**MERCANTILE:** Commercial; relating to business or trade.

**NATIONALISM:** A strong sense of patriotism or a movement in favor of a nation's independence. Also, an extreme form of patriotism that leads to the exclusion of perceived outsiders.

**NATIVISM:** Advocacy of native inhabitants, coupled with opposition to immigration and immigrants.

**POLL TAX:** A flat tax paid by each individual. In some states, citizens were required to pay a poll tax to be eligible to vote. Because it discriminated against poor citizens, this practice was declared unconstitutional in 1966.

**POPULISM:** Advocacy of the common people.

**PRIVATEER:** A private ship licensed by a government to attack ships belonging to enemy nations. The word also applies to sailors serving on such ships.

**PROGRESSIVE:** Forward-looking. Progressives believe in government action to promote social improvement.

**PROPRIETARY CHARTER:** A charter granted by the British Crown to an individual to organize and operate an American colony.

**SPOILS SYSTEM:** The practice of rewarding political supporters by appointing them to government positions

**SUFFRAGE:** The right to vote.

**SUNSET PROVISION:** A clause stating that legislation will expire on a particular date.

**SUPPLY SIDE ECONOMICS:** Economic theories relating to the reduction of taxes as a means of expanding production and overall income.

**SWING STATE:** A state in which the race between presidential candidates is close. Because the electoral

college system awards all of a state's electors to a single candidate, voters in these states are aggressively courted.

**TARIFF:** Taxes on imports or exports.

**TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT:** A social movement to encourage moderation in or complete abstinence from the consumption of alcoholic beverages.

**TERM LIMITS:** A limit on the number of terms a person may serve in a particular office.

**TRADE GUILD:** An association of artisans or merchants formed to pursue and protect their common interests.

**TRANSCENDENTALISM:** A nineteenth-century philosophical movement emphasizing the unity of nature and the precedence of intuition over experience.

**TRUST:** Corporations or firms that combine their resources in order to establish monopolies and reduce competition in an industry or business. Reduced competition allows trusts to control prices of the products they produce.