

GLOSSARY

A

abate:

to reduce in amount; put an end to; make void or annul

abet: to actively, knowingly, and intentionally assist another in the committing (or attempt) of a crime

abolitionist: one favoring principles or measures fostering the end of slavery

absolute: complete, pure, free from restriction or limitation

adherent: a follower of a leader or party, or a believer in a cause

adjournment: the closing, or end, of a session

adjudicate: to settle something judicially

adjudicated: a matter or controversy that has already been decided through judicial procedure

adjudication: the act of settling something judicially

adjudicatory: having to do with the process of settling something judicially

adverse: contrary to one's interests; harmful or unfavorable

aggrieved: suffering physical injury or a loss of one's property interest, monetary interest, or personal rights

agrarian: having to do with farming or farming communities and their interests

alien: a citizen of another country

alternative dispute resolution: any means of settling disputes outside of the courtroom, typically including arbitration, mediation, early neutral evaluation, and conciliation

amend: to alter or change

antitrust: laws protecting commerce and trade from monopolistic restraints on competition

appellate: a court having jurisdiction to review the findings of lower courts

appoint: to select someone to fill an office or position

apportion: to divide and assign according to a plan

appropriate: to set aside for or assign to a particular purpose or group

arbitrate: to resolve disagreements whereby parties choose a person or group of people familiar with the issues in question to hear and settle their dispute

arbitration the settling of a dispute by a neutral third party

Articles of Confederation: first constitution of the United States (in effect 1781–1789); it established a union between the thirteen states, but with a weak central government

B

bipartisan: involving members of two parties, especially the two major political parties

blacklist: a list of persons who are to be denied employment

block grant: an unrestricted grant of federal money to state and local governments to support social welfare programs

bondage: a state of being involuntarily bound or subjugated to someone or something

boycott: to refuse to purchase goods or services from a specific company

C

capitulate: to surrender under specific conditions; to give up resistance

carcinogenic: cancer-causing

cause of action: reason or ground for initiating a proceeding in court

ensor: to restrict the expression of something considered objectionable

charter: document that creates a public or private corporation and outlines the principles, functions, and organization of the corporate body

checks and balances: the limiting powers that each branch of government has over the other two. (The government is divided into three branches: legislative, executive, and judicial, each with distinct powers.)

civil action: a lawsuit brought to protect an individual right or redress a wrong, as distinct from criminal proceedings

civil disobedience: nonviolent protest

civil libertarian: one who is actively concerned with the protection of the fundamental freedoms guaranteed to the individual in the Bill of Rights

civil penalties: fines or money damages imposed as punishment

Civil Rights movement: the movement to win political, economic, and social equality for African Americans

class action: a lawsuit brought by a representative member of a large group of people who have suffered the same injury or damages

Cold War: a conflict over ideological differences carried on by methods short of military action and usually without breaking off diplomatic relations; usually refers to the ideological conflict between the U.S. and former U.S.S.R.

collateral: property put up by a borrower to secure a loan that could be seized if the borrower fails to pay back the debt

collective bargaining: a method of negotiations, usually between employees and an employer, in which a representative negotiates on behalf of an organized group of people

commerce: the large-scale exchange of goods, involving transportation from one place to another

commerce clause: the provision of the U.S. Constitution (Article I, section 8, clause 3) that gives Congress exclusive powers over interstate commerce—the buying, selling, or exchanging of goods between states

commodity: an article of trade or commerce that can be transported; especially an agricultural or mining product

common law: a system of laws developed in England—and later applied in the U.S.—based on judicial precedent rather than statutory laws passed by a legislative body

communism: an economic and social system characterized by the absence of classes and by common ownership of the means of production and subsistence