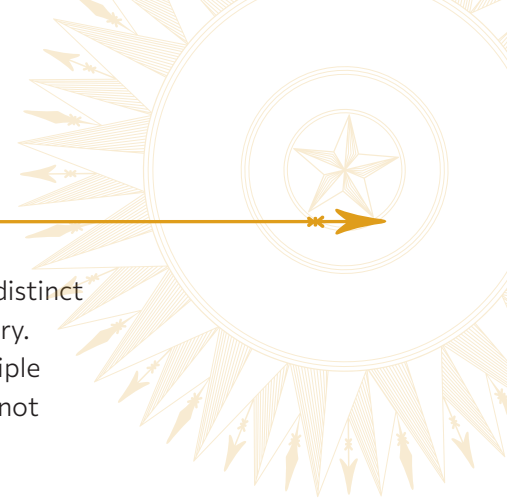


GLOSSARY



The terms *state*, *nation*, and *country* are often used interchangeably, but there is a distinct difference between them. A *nation* is a group of people with shared culture or history. They may or may not have a country. More often *countries* and *states* contain multiple nations within them. A *state* has its own independent government and may or may not have full sovereignty. *States* with full sovereignty are also called *countries*.

abolition/abolitionist

The act of officially ending a system, practice, or institution. An abolitionist is a person who advocates for the ending of a system, practice, or institution. Most often used in reference to the movement to end slavery.

activism/activist

To take action to create political or social changes in society or the world through various means. Some examples of activism include writing letters to government officials, staging a protest, participating in boycotts, and more. An activist is someone who works toward that change.

Age of Revolutions

A period of time between the late 18th to mid-19th centuries during which many countries experienced revolutions, or significant changes, in government, politics, and society.

amendment

An official change. Most often used in reference to changes in the Constitution.

anti-colonialism

To be opposed to colonial rule, where one country controls another.

anti-slavery societies

Organized groups of people whose aim was to end slavery and the slave trade. Also called abolition societies.

article

A specific section of a legal document, usually numbered.

Articles of Confederation

The first attempt at a national government by the United States. The Articles of Confederation was the first written constitution of the United States and went into effect in 1781. Under it, the states, not the central government, had

the most power. It was eventually replaced by the United States Constitution in 1789 because the lack of central authority made it difficult to fund the Congress and the country's operation. The official title of the document is the Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union.

assimilation

Adopting the way of life of another culture. In many countries, Indigenous cultures and nations were required by law to adopt other cultures against their wishes.

boycott

A form of protest in which people refuse to buy or engage in the services of an organization or person.

broadside

A sheet of paper, often with information printed on it for display like a poster.

civil rights

The rights that are granted to citizens by the government. Recently, this term has referred to the basic rights and freedoms that everyone is entitled to.

colonialism/colonial

The act of one country taking control of another country.

Committee of Five

The committee responsible for the development of the Declaration of Independence. It was one of the Second Continental Congress's committees created to prepare for becoming an independent country. The members of the committee included John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Robert Livingston, and Roger Sherman.

constitution

A legal document explaining the basic rules of a country, state, organization, or group of people. It explains the powers and responsibilities of leadership and the rights and responsibilities of those who are being governed.

The Constitution usually refers to the constitution of the United States.

decolonization

The process of a colony becoming independent or self-governing. It can also refer to the reclaiming of Indigenous culture and identity.

delegate

A person chosen to represent a state or group of people.

desegregation

The ending of a policy that separates people, usually because of their race, religion, or gender.

diplomat

A person who is chosen to represent their country in discussions or negotiations between different countries.

disenfranchise

To deprive or take away the right to vote.

dissolved/dissolution

The process of a country formally breaking apart.

empire

A group of regions, nations, or territories under the control of one ruler or country.

Enlightenment

An intellectual movement during the 17th and 18th centuries that believed human reason and learning could help improve society. It sparked developments in art, science, philosophy, and politics, including the idea that government could be run by the people rather than a monarch. Also called the Age of Enlightenment.

enslaved

Owned by another person. Saying “enslaved person” rather than “slave” can remind people of the humanity of the person who is in the condition of being owned by another person.

French National Assembly

The first revolutionary government of France during the French Revolution. It operated between June 17, 1789 and July 9, 1789.

French National Convention

The government of the French Republic between September 1792 and October 1795.

grassroots

A modern term describing the most basic level of society. Grassroots movements and organizations primarily target and engage with common people rather than those in positions of power.

grievances

A complaint about unfair treatment. In the Declaration of Independence, it is a section describing the colonists' complaints against King George and Great Britain.

human rights

Rights that all human beings possess and are entitled to without discrimination.

ideological

An adjective describing a collection of ideas or beliefs (called ideologies).

imperial/imperialism

When one country takes control of another country, region, or territory, usually by force.

Indigenous

A term referring to native people of a region or country.

International Court of Justice

The judicial body of the United Nations whose job is to settle disputes between countries and to give legal advice to United Nations' agencies. Sometimes shortened to ICJ.

living document

A document that is continually edited and updated over time rather than remaining unchanged.

nation

A group of people with shared culture or history.

natural rights

The idea that all people are born with certain rights, and those rights cannot be taken away by anyone, including the government.

occupation

When one country's military takes control of another country, region, or territory. Also called a military occupation.

petition

A formal written request, typically one signed by many people, appealing to authority with respect to a particular cause.

picket

A form of protest involving a group of people walking or standing outside a specific place usually holding signs or posters.

preamble

The beginning of a document that states its purpose.

ratified

To sign or give formal approval to a treaty, constitution, contract, or agreement to make it official.

representative government

A form of government in which people elect their lawmakers, the members of the legislature (representatives). They are then held accountable to and by the voters for their activity within the government.

republic/republican/republicanism

A democracy where the head of state and representatives are elected by the people.

resonate

A feeling of strong connection with something.

rights

Something that a person is allowed to get, have, or do. Rights may be provided by laws or governments, or they may be things that a person is born with. Rights that are protected by law vary by country. Rights are often sorted into different categories such as civil, cultural, economic, political, and social.

secession

To legally or formally separate, usually from a country.

segregation

The act of separating or dividing someone or something from others. Racial segregation refers to separating people based on race.

self-determination

The idea that every nation, or group of people, has a right to choose their own government, political status, and economic and social development.

self-government

The act of governing oneself without the interference or control of an outside authority.

social reform movements

Collective efforts to improve society. Social reforms tend to address what is seen as an injustice in society.

sovereignty

The authority of a state to govern itself without outside intervention. Popular sovereignty places that authority in the hands of the people.

sovereign state

An independent state that governs itself without outside intervention.

state

An independent government with defined borders. A state's government may or may not have full sovereignty. Those with full sovereignty are also called countries.

In countries like the United States, each state maintains an individual government, but do not have full sovereignty as they answer to a national government.

suffrage/suffragist

The right to vote in an election. A person who advocates for the extension of the right to vote. Often used in reference to supporters of the Women's Suffrage Movement.

unalienable/inalienable

Unable to be taken away from or given away by someone. Often used in relation to a person's individual rights.

union

A group of workers who join together to improve their pay, benefits, and working conditions.

United Nations

An international organization created to promote peace and cooperation between the world's nations. There are currently 193 member countries within the United Nations. Sometimes shortened to UN.