Abolition
The act of officially ending or stopping something. Often used in relation to the movement to end the practice of slavery.

Abstain
To choose not to participate in something.

Administration
The act of managing or supervising something, like a business or political entity such as a state or country. Also often refers to the people who do the managing or supervising.

Anonymity
The state of being anonymous, keeping one’s identity secret or unknown.

Aristocracy
A class of people that are few but privileged and wealthy, often holding positions of power. Those in the aristocracy emerged as a political class between ordinary people and the titled nobility of the British Empire during the 17th century.

Artisans
People who are skilled at making something by hand. Often used synonymously with “tradesmen.”

Assembly/Assemblies
The local governing body for a colony in British North America. Not all colonies began with a colonial assembly, but by the time of the American Revolution, most operated under one, alongside a governor who was typically appointed by the King.

Battalion
A large group of military troops, often broken into smaller companies and regiments.

Birthright
Something that you deserve, or believe that you deserve, simply because you were born.

British Americans
A broad category used by historians to describe the people who lived within North American and Caribbean territories claimed by the British Crown in the eighteenth century. During the period itself, a variety of terms applied to the people living in these areas. Some of these terms were self-applied, like the names various Native American groups used for their own communities, and some were imposed by outsiders, like the application of the term “British subjects” to newly conquered French Canadians in the 1760s. Categories like “subject” came with legal rights, like protection, and obligations, like taxes and military service. Whether an individual was considered a “subject” was often controversial. The question of whether Native people had legal rights under British law, for example, often shifted based on whether British authorities found it politically helpful to recognize them.

British East India Company
A trading company that bought and sold goods including spices, silk, tea, as well as human beings, throughout the British Empire, and that maintained a close relationship with rulers of the empire. The British East India Company had a monopoly on British trade in much of Asia and were even empowered to form private armies and establish control over local populations in Asia.

British Liberties
A set of rights that subjects within the British Empire began to claim in response to the expansion of Parliament and British crown power over local colonial governance in the eighteenth century. It emerged from the earlier concept of “English Liberties,” or inherited rights of those who identified as English or lived within England. These included the right to a trial by a jury of peers, to not suffer unlawful imprisonment, to consent to taxation or the removal of one’s property, and to not have their lands or property taken away without just cause. These rights were not written in one single document but were a set of common understandings drawn from documents such as the
Magna Carta (1215) and English Bill of Rights (1689) as well as other laws and court cases over several centuries. The question of whether English Liberties extended beyond England itself to colonies and territories across the empire shaped much of the conflict between Britain and its North American colonies.

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

**Caricature**
A drawing or representation of an individual that exaggerates the subject’s features to poke fun at or ridicule them.

**Charter**
A written document that serves as a founding document for an organization or other legal entity, or as a guarantee of certain rights and privileges from a governmental leader. Many American colonies were founded using charters granted from the British crown. These charters granted permission to companies or groups of investors to colonize and govern territory as part of the British Empire.

**Civic**
Something related to the affairs of a citizen, city or community.

**Colony/Colonies**
An area under the political control of another country and often times settled in part by people from that country.

**Commerce**
The buying and selling of goods, generally on a large scale.

**Committee of Five**
The committee of five delegates at the Second Continental Congress who were appointed to draft the Declaration of Independence. Thomas Jefferson later claimed primary authorship of the Declaration though he was joined by John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert Livingston.

**Compact**
An agreement between individuals or governments. Most free adult male passengers on the Mayflower signed a compact upon arriving at what would become Massachusetts, as they needed to agree upon a set of rules by which everyone would abide, given that they had accidentally arrived in a place that did not have a royal government already established.

**Conciliatory**
Intending to reduce hostility and/or establish goodwill.

**Consensus**
An agreement between multiple people or parties, generally understood to be unanimous.

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

**Coverture**
A legal practice that held that married women were legally covered by their husbands and that they were not independent legal agents. This practice restricted married women’s rights, as they had no legal, political, or economic authority or identity separate from their husbands. In contrast, single women could own property, make and sign contracts, serve as heads of households, and own and operate businesses.

**Craftsmen**
People who are skilled at making something by hand. Often used synonymously with “tradesmen,” “mechanics,” or “artisans.”

**Delegate**
A person who is appointed by a governing body or elected by voters to represent them at a conference or a convention. In elected government, it is often used synonymously with “representative.”

**Democracy**
A system of government where power rests with the people, either through direct voting or through representative government.

**Dissent**
To disagree with, or express disagreement with, the opinions or actions of another.

**Empathize**
To identify with another by understanding their feelings, thoughts, or experiences.
Executive Offices
The official(s) responsible for enforcing established rules and laws, and/or the people in charge of a business or political entity like a state or national government.

Gentry
The upper or ruling class. This word by itself is often associated with wealthy landowners that did not hold titles of nobility.

Grand Jury
In the 18th century, a group of people from a town, city, or other jurisdiction who were gathered by Royal authority to identify or confirm that people should be tried for crimes committed within their community. In 1776, judges in areas that had rejected Royal authority needed to explain why these grand juries continued to have jurisdiction, even outside of Royal authority. Grand juries themselves sometimes had to explain their legitimacy in public statements. Both forms amounted to types of declarations of independence.

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

Grievance
A formal complaint or cause of distress.

Hereditary
Describing or relating to something being inherited or legally transferred through inheritance. Monarchies are governments where the King or Queen’s position is usually a hereditary role that is passed down to a family member. Preference was usually given to the eldest son in the 18th century.

Hypocrisy
Saying or believing one thing while intentionally acting in a way that contradicts that belief.

Ideal
A goal or high standard to strive toward.

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

Indentured Servitude
A system where individuals signed contracts to serve as laborers for a specific amount of time before receiving their freedom. These contracts were sometimes entered into willingly by British subjects who wanted passage across the Atlantic Ocean to the British colonies but could not afford it themselves or by those — Europeans, free people of African descent — who needed food, shelter, clothing, and the opportunity to learn a skill. In other cases, British subjects were sentenced to indentured servitude as punishment for a crime or because they could not pay their debts. Forced removals of people from their lands in the British countryside drove the growth of cities in Britain itself and helped fill ships with new servants for America.

Independence
Relying on oneself and no longer being affiliated to or controlled by others.

Interior
Inside. When used in relation to 18th century American geography, interior generally means away from the Atlantic Coast, towards the frontier of the American colonies.

Iroquois Confederacy
A political and military alliance between Six different Native American nations, including the Mohawk, Onondaga, Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida, and Tuscarora.

Jubilee
A special day or season of celebration. Biblically, the year of Jubilee was a holy one in which enslaved and imprisoned Hebrews would be freed, servants would return home, land would not be farmed, and debts would be forgiven.

Judicial Offices
Roles held by people, including judges and other officials, who settle disputes relating to the law. Lower courts in colonial America usually traveled on a circuit to cover more area with fewer judges. Most colonial assemblies also served as high courts. Later American Constitutions changed
that and adopted the principle of “separation of powers.”

**Legislature**
The part of a country or state government placed in charge of creating laws. Often referred to as the Legislative Branch of government.

**Liaison**
Someone who communicates between other people or groups to help ensure understanding and/or cooperation.

**Loyalist**
An American colonist who continued to support the British Empire and Army during the American Revolution.

**Marine**
Having to do with the sea.

**Mechanick**
Alternate spelling of “mechanic.” People who are skilled at making something by hand. Often used synonymously with “tradesmen,” “craftsmen,” or “artisans.”

**Militia**
An armed group of people gathered and trained at the local level for the defense of that community. Militias are typically regulated by local governments.

**Monarchy**
A system of government where one person, often a King or Queen, exercises absolute rule over others.

**Native Americans/Native Peoples**
The many different people who together represent the earliest inhabitants of North America, preceding its settlement by colonists. These terms are intentionally broad due to the great number of different nations, tribes, and peoples it refers to. Native Americans lived (and continue to live) throughout the North American continent with unique cultures, languages, and histories. American Indians and/or indigenous peoples are similar terms that are also commonly used and sometimes preferred within different Native communities.

**Pacifist**
A person who believes that violence and war are wrong.

**Parliament**
An assembly of individuals functioning as the legislative branch of the British government. British Parliament consisted of a House of Lords and a House of Commons.

**Pension**
Money paid in recognition of past service. Revolutionary War veterans received this type of payment many years later in compensation for their service and in response to financial hardships faced by many of them.

**Preamble**
A statement that introduces the purpose or goals of a document or speech. When it appears in front of a legal document, it often explains why that document has been written.

**Preemptively**
Acting first in a situation before another person or group can.

**Proclamation**
A formal announcement, often made by a representative of a government.

**Protestant**
A classification for Christian churches and believers that reject the authority of the Pope and focus on the Bible as the only source of religious truth. These churches originated in the “Protestant Reformation” which began in the early 1500s.

**Provincial Conference or Congress**
A meeting or gathering of representatives within a particular province or territory. Authority for these were often self-applied by...
governing bodies established by American Revolutionaries in the 1760s and 1770s.

**Rebellious**
Openly defiant or resistant to authority.

**Reconciliation**
The process of returning to a state of friendship or harmony with another person or group.

**Renounce**
To formally give up, deny, reject, or put aside. Often used in the context of religious faith, or loyalty or allegiance to a ruler or nation.

**Repeal**
To revoke or eliminate an existing rule or law.

**Representative**
A person who is appointed by a governing body or elected by voters to be a representative of that governing body or those voters at a conference or a convention. In an elected government, often used synonymously with “delegate.”

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

**Resolution**
A formal expression of opinion or intended action by an official body, such as a legislature, club, or other group.

**Revolutionary/Revolutionaries**
People who bring about a sudden or sweeping change in government. During the American Revolution, this term often applies to those who supported the United States to establish a new nation independent of Great Britain.

**Self-governance**
The act of governing oneself without the interference or control of an outside authority. Usually used to describe a nation or state’s self-governance, which includes collaboration, constitutionally ordered decision-making, and discussion among individuals.

**Sympathizer**
Someone who has sympathy for another person or group.

**Territory**
An area of land claimed by a person or group.

**Unanimous**
Having the agreement of everyone in a group.