

## Social Studies Terms

### U.S. Civics & Government:

- **President-** The President is responsible for implementing and enforcing the laws written by Congress. The President is both the head of state and head of government of the United States of America, and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces.
- **Executive Branch-** Responsible for the day-to-day enforcement and administration of federal laws. Consists of the President, Vice President, and all the cabinet members.
- **Judicial Branch-** The court system. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the land and holds 9 judges.
- **Legislative Branch-** Writes laws. Consists of the House of Representatives and the Senate, which together form the United States Congress, a total of 435 elected members, divided among the 50 states.
- **Amendment-** A formal or official change made to a law, contract, constitution, or other legal document.
- **The Constitution-** The supreme law of the United States. It is the source of all government powers, and also provides important limitations on the government that protect the fundamental rights of United States citizens.
- **The Bill of Rights-** Contains the first 10 Amendments, which are the foundation of American liberty, securing our most fundamental rights. \*See summary of Bill of Rights hand-out.
- **The Electoral Process-** The presidential election is once every four years (quadrennial). Party candidates are selected in nominating conventions held several months before the general election. It is possible for a candidate to run for office in a general election without the backing of a political party. A candidate's name that does not appear on the ballot can be written in by voters in a space provided for that purpose. During elections, the political parties make ample use of all the media to present their positions to the American people.

### Principles of Democracy:

- **Democracy-** A form of government in which people choose leaders by voting
- **Consent of the Governed-** A phrase from the United States Declaration of Independence. A government's legitimacy and moral right to use state power is only justified and legal when derived from the people or society over which that political power is exercised.
- **Majority Rule-** A decision or ruling based on more than half the votes.
- **Minority Rights-** Individual or collective rights as applied to members of racial, ethnic, class, religious, linguistic or sexual minorities. (A minority is defined as people who hold less than the majority of social power in a society).
- **Separation of Powers-** The state is divided into branches (executive, judicial, legislative), each with separate and independent powers and areas of responsibility so that the powers of one branch are not in conflict with the powers associated with the other branches.
- **Civil Liberties-** Laws established for the good of the community, especially with regard to freedom of action and speech.
- **Citizens-** Legally recognized persons of a nation, either native or naturalized.

## U.S. History:

- **U.S. Indian Policy-** Establishes the relationship between the United States Government and the Indian Tribes within its borders. The Constitution gives the federal government primary responsibility for dealing with tribes.
- **Revolutionary War (1775-1783)** - Also called the American Revolution or War of Independence, was fought between Britain and the British colonies in North America in which the USA won independence. (What we celebrate on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July). We set up our democratic government and created our Constitution and Bill of Rights, which we are governed by today.
- **Civil War (1861-1865)** - The war in the USA between the North and the South. The main issues were economics, states' rights, and slavery. The South tried to secede (break away from the new country), but the North won and the country reunited during the Reconstruction period.
- **Industrial Revolution (late 1800s)** - Social and economic changes brought about by large factory production starting. Because of the abuses during this time period, unions began.
- **World War I (1914-1918)** - Britain, France, Russia, Belgium, Italy, & the USA defeated German, Austria-Hungary, Turkey, and Bulgaria. Think of it as a giant "gang war." A lot of it had to do with pride and who had each other's back.
- **World War II (1939-1945)** - Britain, France, the Soviet Union (Russia), & the USA defeated Germany, Italy, and Japan. The USA became involved when Pearl Harbor was attacked in 1941. It was a war involving big egos and Germany/Japan attacking other countries. This when the Nazis were in power and concentration camps existed.
- **Vietnam War (1953-1964)** - A conflict between South Vietnam and the Vietcong supported by North Vietnam which started in 1954 and ended in 1975. The USA, South Korea, Australia, Thailand, the Philippines, and New Zealand supported and fought with the South Vietnamese against the Communist supporters. Vietnam is reunited today. Many Americans opposed and protested this war in the 1960's and 70's.
- **The Cold War (Late 1940's-1981)** - Not an actual war, but the political struggle between the USA & other Democratic countries, and the Soviet Union & other Communist allies starting after WWII. It was a time of intense political rivalries, the nuclear arms race, and the space race. It ended in 1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union.
- **Iraq War (2003-2011)** - The United States and the United Kingdom claimed that Iraq's alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction posed a threat to their security and that of their coalition/regional allies. The US completed its withdrawal of military personnel in December 2011. However, the insurgency is ongoing and continues to cause thousands of fatalities.
- **War in Afghanistan (2001-present)-** Refers to the intervention by NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, an intergovernmental military alliance) and allied forces in the ongoing Afghan civil war. The war followed the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, in an effort to dismantle al-Qaeda and eliminate its safe haven by removing the Taliban from power.

## Civil Rights:

- **Emancipation Proclamation (1862)** - "that all persons held as slaves" within the rebellious states "are, and henceforward shall be free."
- **Civil Rights Movement**- A worldwide series of political movements for equality before the law that peaked in the 1960s. The main aim of the movements for civil rights included ensuring that the rights of all people are equally protected by the law, including the rights of minorities, women's rights, and LGBT rights.
- **Jim Crow Laws (1877-1964)** - A series of anti-black laws. Ex. The segregation (separation) of public facilities for blacks & whites, such as schools and water fountains.
- **Women's Suffrage (1848-1920)** - The struggle for women's right to vote. In 1920 the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution was passed, which provided: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."
- **Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)** - A landmark US Supreme Court case that challenged the constitutionality of state laws requiring racial segregation in public facilities under the doctrine (principle) of "separate but equal."
- **Brown v. Board of Education (1954)** - A series of cases aimed at desegregating public schools.
- **Roe v. Wade (1973)** - The Court held that a woman may abort her pregnancy for any reason, up until the "point at which the fetus becomes viable."
- **Miranda v. Arizona (1966)** - (Miranda Rights). A man named Ernesto Miranda confessed to kidnapping and raping a retarded woman; he was not told that he did not have to speak without a lawyer present.
- **Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968)** - An American pastor, activist, humanitarian, and leader in the African-American Civil Rights Movement. He is best known for his role in the advancement of civil rights using nonviolent civil disobedience based on his Christian beliefs.

## Economic Concepts:

- **Capitalism**-An economic and political system in which a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit, rather than by the state.
- **Communism**- Political theory advocating community ownership of all property, the benefits of which are to be shared by all according to the needs of each.
- **Socialism**- A way of organizing a society in which major industries are owned and controlled by the government rather than by individual people and companies.
- **Monopoly**- A market in which there are many buyers but only one seller; when you have a monopoly you can ask any price.
- **Labor and Capital**- Labor is the work individuals do to earn capital—the factor of production and wealth in the form of money or other assets.
- **Profit**- A financial gain, especially the difference between the amount earned and the amount spent in buying, operating, or producing something.
- **Entrepreneurship**- The process of identifying and starting a new business venture, sourcing and organizing the required resources, while taking both the risks and rewards associated with the venture.
- **Investment**- The action or process of investing money for profit or material result.

- **Supply and Demand**- The amount of a commodity, product, or service available and the desire of buyers for it; what regulates the price consumers pay.
- **Inflation and Deflation**- The rate at which the general level of prices for goods and services is rising, and, subsequently, purchasing power is falling.
- **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** - The total value of goods produced and services provided in a country during one year.

### The Environment and Society:

- **Sustainability**- Able to be upheld, maintained, or kept intact.
- **Technology**- The application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes. Technologies significantly affect human as well as other animal species' ability to control and adapt to their natural environments.
- **Natural Resources**- Materials or substances such as minerals, forests, water, and fertile land that occur in nature and can be used for economic gain.
- **Diversity**- Variety. Ex. Our individual differences; each individual is unique along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies.
- **Immigration**- The action of coming to live permanently in a foreign country.
- **Diaspora**- Dispersion (scattering) of any people from their original homeland, especially by force because of cultural or religious beliefs.
- **Assimilation**- When people of different cultural backgrounds come to see themselves as part of a larger national family.
- **Rural**- Relating to or characteristic of the countryside.
- **Urban**- Relating to or characteristic of a city or town.