

Glossary

abstract art art focused on structure and form

acre a unit of area for measuring land equal to 43,560 square feet, or 4,840 square yards

advocate a supporter

agency reservation headquarters; on Indian reservations the agency was the government's headquarters where the agent lived

allot divide up

allotment the practice of subdividing Indian reservations into privately owned parcels

allotments individual pieces of land created by the allotment system

amendment a change, particularly to a constitution or law

annuities annual payments of food, equipment, supplies, and funds the U.S. government owed a tribe by treaty

anomaly something peculiar or unexpected

archaeologist a scientist who studies archaeology

archaeology the scientific study of human cultures by analyzing the physical clues that people have left behind

arid dry

artifact an object produced or shaped by human activity

asbestos a lightweight mineral made up of millions of tiny, heat-resistant fibers

assayer a person who determines the value or quality of gold

assimilate to be absorbed into the majority culture

assimilation when one culture is absorbed into the majority culture

atlatl a very effective throwing stick for killing animals at a distance

awl a sewing tool used to punch holes

baby boom dramatic increase in the number of babies born

band saw a saw made of a continuous toothed steel band looped over two wheels

bedroom community a town where people who work in a nearby city live

bindlestiffs migrant lumber workers who carried their bedrolls on their backs

biodiesel a diesel fuel made from seed oils like canola, safflower, or flax seed

biodiversity variety of plant and animal species

bison pound a corral-like enclosure used to trap bison

board foot a measurement of lumber equal to a board 1 foot long, 1 foot wide, and 1 inch thick

bonanza rich mineral deposit

boom-and-bust cycle sudden economic activity followed by decline, then a period of quiet, and then another burst of activity

booster someone who vigorously promotes something

bootleg illegal

boycott refuse to do business with

brand a mark burned into each animal's hide that identified which ranch it belonged to

bribe to offer illegal payments

brigade a team, as in a team or group of trappers working together

brucellosis an infectious animal disease

bulkhead a wall dividing shafts belonging to different mines

bureaucratic concerned with official procedure

burnover a fire that overtakes firefighters or their equipment

cairn a pile of stones used as a marker

caldera (a large crater formed by a volcanic explosion or the collapse of a volcanic cone)

capital (in business) money used as an investment to produce more wealth

capitalism an economic system in which privately owned businesses carry on trade for profit

carbon-dating a scientific method of determining the age of something that was once alive

carburetor part of an engine

cede give up

Cenezoic "recent life"; the geologic era covering 65 million years ago to the present

census a count of every person living in each area of the country

chert a stone used in tool-making

chinook warm winter wind

chronometer a very accurate clock

circular saw a circular blade (for cutting lumber) turned by water power from a stream

civil liberties fundamental individual rights

civil rights fundamental rights guaranteed in the U.S. constitution

civilian nonmilitary; a person who is not in the military

commerce business activity

communal shared by all members of a community

communist a political and economic system in which property and businesses are owned by the government

Confederacy an alliance of states; the South during the Civil War

confluence where two rivers of the same size come together

Conquistador Spanish conqueror

conscientious objector a person who refuses military service on religious or moral grounds

conservation reducing the use of something to make it last a long time

conservative (in politics) favoring big business and small government

constitution a document that sets rules for government

constitutional convention a meeting to write a constitution

consumerism the idea that buying consumer goods benefits the economy

convene assemble

cooperative a business or company that is owned by the people who use it

cord unit of volume for measuring cut timber; 128 cubic feet

count(ing) coup earn(ing) respect by performing acts of bravery during a battle (Warriors counted coup by touching an enemy or taking his horse, usually without killing him.)

cradleboard a baby carrier with a wooden frame

creation stories traditional stories that tell about the creation of the world

culture a shared system of behaviors, attitudes, and understandings

cure (in reference to grass or meat) to dry

delegate a representative of the people

deregulation removing government controls

derrick a drilling rig

drive line a stone formation like a runway

dryland without irrigation

dude a vacationer who wanted to experience the West

dynamo a machine that converts mechanical energy into electric energy

easement the legal right to use a piece of land

emigrant a person who moves from his or her home country to settle in a new place

epidemic rapid spread of disease

erosion the wearing away of soil and rock by ice, water, or wind

ethanol a fuel made from corn and grain

Euro-American an American with European influence or ancestry

evaporation loss of moisture to the air

executive branch (in government) the governor and administrative offices

executive order an order issued by the president of the United States

extractive industry an industry based on removing natural resources from the earth

faller a lumberjack who fells (cuts down) trees

fallowing plowing fields without seeding them

figurative art representing people, animals, objects, and landscapes

financier an investor who finances huge projects

flint a glassy, brown stone used to make tools

flume channel

forage animal food for grazing

foreclose to take possession of property for failure to repay loans

fossil any remains or impression of ancient creatures

fossil fuels oil, coal, and natural gas formed from sediment

freight train in the pre-railroad days, a string of freight wagons pulled by a team of oxen or mules

gender whether a person is male or female

geology study of the earth (geo = earth; logy=study)

GI a nickname for a U.S. serviceman or woman; short for Government Issue

glacial till sediment left behind by glaciers

glacier a mass or slow-moving river of ice

graded (in road building) leveled to a manageable slope for cars

grain elevator where grain is stored for shipping by rail

grassroots made up of ordinary citizens

greenhorn beginner

Greenwich Mean Time the local time in Greenwich, England, at the central meridian of the earth

grub food

headwaters the source of a river

high-water mark the mark on the riverbank below which the water has washed away most of the vegetation

hoist cage a steel elevator that took men down into a mine

holding company a corporation that owns other corporations

horticultural plant-cultivating

human dignity (in the Montana state constitution) every person's right to be treated with respect

hydraulic mining mining with pressurized water

hydroelectric generating electricity from water flow

hydroelectric power electricity generated by water flow

hyper-patriotism loyalty to a person's country taken to an extreme level

immigration people moving to a new country

indigenous native to a particular land; indigenous rights are the rights of native peoples within their own land

industrialization creation of factories; rapid development of industry brought about by the introduction of machinery

industrialize to develop industries on a large scale

inflation higher prices

infrastructure basic facilities, such as roads, bridges, water, sewer, and communications

initiative (in government) a law passed by the people rather than by the legislature

intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) an armed, self-propelled missile that maintains a predetermined course as it flies

internment imprisonment

intertribal between tribes

invertebrate an animal without a backbone

irrigation bringing in a supply of water to make farmland more productive

judicial branch (in government) the court system, including the state Supreme Court

labor union an organization of employees that bargains with employers

land grant free land that the federal government gives to a company, organization, or state

lath thin, flat strips of wood used beneath plastering

latitude distance north or south from the equator

lava molten rock

legacy something handed down from the past

legislative branch (in government) the legislature, which includes the senate and house of representatives

legislature the branch of government that passes laws

liberal (in politics) favoring strong government as the people's voice against corporate control

liberty bonds savings certificates that the government sold to raise money for the war

lobby try to influence

longitude distance east or west from the central meridian, which runs from the South Pole to the North Pole through Greenwich, England

lousy full of lice

magma hot, molten material beneath the earth's crust that forms igneous rock

mainstream reflecting the majority's behaviors and beliefs

malnourished seriously underfed

manholes iron escape holes

Manifest Destiny the idea that the United States had a moral duty to expand its culture across the continent

mass media communication technologies that can reach millions of people

maverick an unidentified calf that wandered off from its mother; also means "independent thinker"

mechanize to change a process so that machines do work previously done by human or animal labor

medicine wheel a structure made of stones arrayed in a circle

megafauna large animals (mega means "large")

meridian line of longitude

Mesozoic "middle life"; the geologic era covering 245 million to 65 million years ago

meteorology weather

mint (in reference to money) make

missile silo a site for launching a missile

monopoly exclusive control

muskeg a swampy bog too wet to grow many kinds of plants

musket a long, smooth-bore rifle

mutton sheep meat

native copper naturally occurring copper found as nuggets

natural resource economy an economy based on natural resource extraction like mining, timber, and agriculture

natural resource extraction industries based on removing natural resources

neoclassical reflecting Greek and Roman traditions

nipper a young errand boy who fetched tools, tended mules, and did other odd jobs for the mines

Northwest Passage a water route across North America from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean

ochre paint made from red clay

open-pit mining removing low-grade ore using huge earth-moving equipment

ore rock containing precious metals

outfit (in ranching) a ranching operation

pacifist a person who is opposed to war or other kinds of violence for any reason

paleontologist a scientist who studies fossils

Paleozoic "ancient life"; the geologic era covering 544 million to 245 million years ago

peavey a spiked iron pole used to control floating logs

peddler a person who sells something door-to-door

pemmican a traditional Northern Plains food made of dried meat, fat, and berries

pension retirement pay

per-capita income the average annual income per person

petroglyph an image carved into rock

pictograph an image painted on rock

pipestone a reddish, clay-like stone used to make pipes

placer mining separating loose gold and nuggets from dirt, sand, and gravel in a creek bed; from the Spanish word *placer*, meaning "sand bank"

plains high-elevation grasslands

plat to map something

played out no longer yielded gold

plew a beaver hide stretched and flattened for shipping

poke a little buckskin sack

populism politics based on issues important to everyday people

Post-contact Period after contact between European and American Indian cultures, which began about 1600

POW a military prisoner of war

power contract a right to buy power at a certain price

pow-wow an American Indian celebration

preamble introduction

Precambrian period when the oldest rocks on earth were formed; the geologic era covering 4.6 billion years to 544 million years ago

precipitation rain and snow

Pre-contact Period before many Indians came into contact with European cultures

prejudice a pre-formed negative opinion

preservation preserving something from destruction

Prohibition a movement to outlaw alcohol; or the period of time when drinking or selling alcohol was illegal

propaganda information designed to persuade people of something

prospector a person who searches for gold

prove up fulfill certain obligations for land ownership

provision (in the constitution) something that the constitution provides for

quartz mining hard-rock mining

rain shadow an area on the inland side of a mountain range that is dryer because it is sheltered from rain-bearing clouds

ratify formally approve

ration to limit people's access to goods or food

reapportionment to apportion, or distribute, in a new way

reclaim to claim back, convert to usable land, or make useful again

referendum when the people vote to reject a law passed by the legislature

refining (in mining) separating precious metal from rock

relocation camp a prison camp where Japanese Americans were sent to live during World War II

rendezvous a French word that means a meeting in arranged in advance

renewable resource a natural resource that is capable of restoring itself

repeal cancel

reservation an area of land that a tribe or tribes reserved for their own use through treaties

revenue income, especially to a state, corporation, or industry

right-of-way the legal right to cross someone else's property

ritual ceremonial practice

roundup a cooperative effort to round up all the cattle in a region, sort them out, brand the new calves, and trail each herd to its home range

rustle (in mining) to round up (or get) work

rustling (in ranching) rounding up cattle or horses for thievery

rustling card a card allowing a miner to “rustle up” (or get) work

rustling card system the Anaconda Copper Mining Company’s system of requiring a Company-issued card before a miner could get work.

sabotage deliberately destroy

sawyer a lumberjack who works with a saw

scrap drive a campaign to get people to turn in household items, rubber, or metal for re-use by the military

seasonal round the pattern of harvesting various foods according to the season

secede separate

sedentary not moving around

sediment solid matter that settles to the bottom of fluid

sedition speech or conduct that encourages rebellion against the government

self-propelled moving under its own power

service economy an economy based on providing health care, education, and other services

sextant a tool that measures the angle between two points

sinew animal tendon

sluice a long wooden trough with an open top and cleats along the bottom

smoke jumping parachuting out of an airplane into a fire zone to help fight fires

snag (in forestry) a standing dead tree

socialist the belief that major industries and services should be owned and regulated by the state; also a person who holds this belief

society a large group of people who live in a particular place, speak a common language, and share interests, relationships, basic beliefs, and social identity

sovereign independent and self-governing

sovereignty powers of self-government

spooning making out

stockyard pens for holding animals before shipping to market

strike an organized protest in which workers refuse to work

strip town a town with one main business street

strip-farm to plant crops and fallow in alternating strips

subsidies financial help from the government

subsurface compacting compressing the soil beneath the surface

suffrage the right to vote

Superfund site a hazardous waste site that is part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Superfund pollution clean-up program

superpower a nation with greater economic, political, and military power than most nations

survey to measure land for mapping

sweetgrass a plant used for ceremonies

telegraph an electric message system that transmitted coded signals along a wire

termination the end of something; a federal program to terminate its special relationship with some Indian tribes

theory a set of logically connected ideas

threshing separating wheat from straw

tipi rings stone circles left after tipi encampments

title legal ownership of land

topography land features; the arrangement of hills, mountains, and slopes

traction friction between the tire and the road

transcontinental all the way across the continent

transistor radio a small, portable radio that runs on batteries

travois a transport device made of two joined poles and drawn by an animal

treaty an agreement between governments

treaty rights tribal rights established by treaty

trust when something is owned by one person but managed by another

tundra semi-frozen shallow soil where plants grow low to the ground

tycoon a wealthy businessman

urbanization the growth of cities

vaquero a Spanish word for “cowboy”

vein (in mining) layer, as in a gold vein

vermiculite a yellowish mineral that expands when heated

veteran a person who has served in the military

veto reject

vigilance keeping a careful watch

vigilantes men who formed a Vigilance Committee; people who took the law into their own hands

vision quest a time of fasting and praying alone in a special place to gain spiritual understanding

volcanologist a scientist who studies volcanoes

war bonds savings certificates issued by the government as a way to raise money for the war

whipsaw a long, two-handled saw; also called a pit saw

wildcatter an independent oil prospector

wildland/urban interface the area where the city and the wilderness meet

work relief relieving poverty by giving people jobs

youth culture a feeling among urban young people that they had more in common with each other than with older people, even in their own families or communities