

A

acropolis n. the highest point in an ancient Greek city

adapt v. to change

adobe rt. a kind of clay that when dried is used as a building material

agora it an open space in an ancient Greek city that served as a marketplace and social center

agriculture tr. the practice of growing plants and rearing animals for food

alliance n. an agreement between nations to fight each other's enemies; a partnership

anthropologist n. a scientist who studies the cultural development of humans

aqueduct rt. a long stone channel that carries clean water

arabesque it an abstract design made up of patterns or flowers, leaves, vines, or geometric shapes

arch rt. a curved structure over an opening

archaeologist rt. a scientist who studies past human life by analyzing fossils and artifacts

archipelago rt. a collection of islands

aristocracy n. an upper class that is richer and more powerful than the rest of society

artifact it an object made by humans from a past culture

artisan n. a person skilled at making things by hand

B

barbarian n. in this context, a person who lived outside the Roman Empire

barter v. to exchange goods

bas-relief n. a realistic sculpture with figures raised against a flat background

bubonic plague n. a disease that killed more than a third of Europe's population during the Middle Ages

bureaucracy rt. a system of government in which appointed officials in specialized departments run the various offices

burgher n. a wealthy, town-dwelling merchant during the Middle Ages

bushido n. a strict code of behavior followed by the samurai in feudal Japan

C

cacao n. a bean used to make chocolate

caliph n. the title of the chief Muslim leader who was regarded as a successor of Muhammad from A.D. 632 to 1924

calligraphy n. a form of elegant writing

caravan n. a group of people that travels together

caravel n. a small, fast ship used by Spanish and Portuguese explorers

cartography n. the study of maps and mapmaking

caste system m a rigid social hierarchy in India that divides people into hereditary classes

catacomb n. a hidden underground chamber where people are buried

catapult m a weapon that hurls large stones

cataract n. a rock formation that creates churning rapids; also. a large waterfall

cathedral n. a towering church built during the Middle Ages; often the place from which a bishop ruled

celadon tr. a type of Chinese pottery with a unique blue-green color

chinampa n. a floating field that supported agriculture

chivalry n. a code of conduct for knights

city n. a political, economic, and cultural center with a large population

city-state n. a self-governing unit made up of a city and its surrounding lands and settlements; a city that controls the surrounding villages and towns

civilization n. a society with a highly developed culture and technology

civil war n. a war between groups in the same country

clan rt. a group of families that shares a common ancestor

classical adj. relating to ancient Greek and Roman culture

clergy n. the religious leaders who oversee ceremonies and deliver teachings of the Christian Church

codex n. a folded book made of tree bark paper

colony n. a group of people that settles in a new land but keeps ties to its native country

comedy n. a humorous form of Greek drama that often mocked famous people

commerce n. the buying and selling of goods

commodity n. a trade good

common law n. a system of law established in England to make sure people received equal treatment

communal adj. shared confederation n. a group of allies

confederation a group of allies

conquistador n. a Spanish conqueror who sought gold and other riches in the Americas

consul n. one of two chief leaders elected yearly in ancient Rome

convert v. to change one's religion

cosmopolitan adj. worldly

covenant n. a religious agreement

creation story n. an account that explains how the world began and how people came to exist

creed rt. a statement of belief

crossroads n. the place where two roads meet

cultivate v. to grow a crop

cultural diffusion rt. the process by which cultures interact and ideas spread from one area to another

cultural hearth n. a place from which new ideas, practices, and technology spread

culture n. a group's way of life, including types of food, shelter, clothing, language, religion, behavior, and ideas

cuneiform n. the earliest form of writing, invented by the Sumerians

D

dalmyo n. a class of large landowning families in medieval Japan

delta t an area where a river fans out into various branches as it flows into a body of water

democracy n. a form of government in which citizens have a direct role in governing themselves or elect representatives to lead them

denomination n. a branch of one type of religion

deplete v. to use something up, such as a resource

desertification n. the process by which once fertile land is transformed into a desert

dharma n. the Buddha's teachings; divine law

dhow n. a ship with a long, thin hull and triangular sails

dictator n. a person who rules with total authority

direct democracy n. a form of democracy in which citizens gather together to vote on laws and policies

diversity rt. a range of different things; a variety

divine adj. having the nature of a god

domestication tr. the raising of plants and animals to make them useful to humans

drought n. a long period of dry, hot weather

dynastic cycle tr. the pattern of the rise and fall of dynasties in ancient and early China

dynasty n. a series of rulers from the same family

E

elliptical adj. oval

embassy n. a group of people who represent their nation in a foreign country

emperor n. the supreme ruler of an empire

empire n. a group of different lands and people governed by one ruler

enlightened despot n. an absolute ruler who applied Enlightenment principles to his or her reign

epic poem rt. a long story in the form of a narrative poem

epistle n. a letter

excommunicate v. to officially exclude a member of a church from its rituals and membership

exile n. the forced removal from one's native country

exploit v. to mistreat

F

famine t an extreme lack of crops or food causing widespread hunger

fertile adj. encouraging the growth of crops and plants

feudalism n. a political and social system in which a vassal receives protection from a lord in exchange for obedience and service

filial piety n. the belief that children owe their parents and ancestors respect

fossil n. the remains of organisms that lived long ago

fresco n. a picture painted directly onto a wall

G

geocentric theory n. a theory that places Earth at the center of the universe

geoglyph rt. a large, geometric design or shape drawn on the ground

gladiator tr. a man in ancient Rome who fought others for entertainment

global citizen rt. a person who functions effectively in the interdependent, modern world

glyph n. a symbolic picture used to represent a word, syllable, or sound

golden age n. a period of great cultural achievement

government n. an organization set up to make and enforce rules in a society

griot rt. a West African storyteller who relates stories through the oral tradition

guild n. a group of craftspeople that helped protect and improve the working conditions of its members

H

haiku n. a form of Japanese poetry that has 17 syllables in three unrhymed lines of 5, 7, and 5 syllables

hanbok n. a traditional Korean jacket and skirt or pant combination

heliocentric theory tr. a theory that places the sun at the center of the universe

Hellenistic adj. relating to Greek history or culture

helot n. a state-owned slave who was part of the lowest class of ancient Greek society

heresy n. beliefs contrary to Church teachings; opposition to Church policy

hero n. a character who faces a challenge that demands courage, strength, and intelligence

hierarchy n. a system in which people belong to social classes of different ranks
hieroglyph n. a picture representing an object, sound, or idea that was part of the ancient Egyptian writing system
highland n. a type of land that is high above the sea
hub n. a center
humanism n. a movement that focused on the importance of the individual
hunter-gatherer tr. a human who hunts animals and gathers wild plants to eat
hypothesis n. an explanation that can be tested

I

icon n. an image of Jesus or a saint
imam n. a Muslim religious leader
immortal adj. able to live forever
impose v. to force someone to do something
Indulgence n. the release from punishment for sins, sold by papal officials
Inoculation n. a vaccine containing a mild form of a disease to prevent the development of that disease
Iron n. a metal that is found in rock
Irrigation n. the supply of water to fields using human-made systems
isolate v. to cut off from the rest of the world
isolationism n. a rejection of foreign contact and outside influences

J

janissary n. a highly trained and disciplined soldier in the Ottoman army
jury n. a group of people chosen to make a decision based on evidence presented in a trial

K

kabuki n. a form of Japanese drama that involves luxurious costumes and elaborate makeup
karma n. in Hinduism, a state of being influenced by a person's actions and conduct; determines the kind of life into which a person will be reborn
khanate n. a region of the Mongol empire
kimchi n. a spicy pickled vegetable mix that serves as Korea's national dish
kiva n. a circular-shaped chamber built in the ground by the ancient Pueblo
knight n. a warrior in medieval Europe
kosher adj. specially prepared according to Jewish dietary laws

L

labyrinth n. a maze

land bridge n. a strip of land connecting two landmasses

legacy n. the things both cultural and technological, left to us from past cultures

legend tr. a story from the past that is accepted as truth but cannot be proven

legionary n. a professional soldier in ancient Rome

lingua franca tr. a language commonly used by many different groups of people

longbow n. a weapon that allowed archers to fire arrows

lord n. a nobleman who received land from a king in medieval feudal society

lowland n. a type of land that is low and level

M

maize n. a type of corn first domesticated by early Mesoamerican

manor tr. a self-contained world located on land belonging to a lord

mansa n. a West African king

mariner n. a sailor

maritime adj. relating to the sea

matrilineal adj. relating to descendants traced through the mother

medieval adj. a period in history that spanned from the AD. 500s to the 1500s; from the Latin *medieum* (middle) and *aevum* (age)

meditation n. the act of achieving inner peace and an enlightened realization of the divine aspect in each person

megafauna n. the large animals of a particular region, habitat, or geological period

mercenary n. a hired soldier

metallurgy n. the science of obtaining metals in their natural form and preparing them for use

migration n. the movement from one place to another

minaret n. a tall, slender tower that is part of a mosque

missionary tr. a person who goes to another country to do religious work; a person who tries to spread Christianity to others

monarchy tr. a government ruled by a single person, such as a king

monastery n. a Christian religious community

monotheism n. the worship of a single God

monsoon n. a strong seasonal wind in South and Southeast Asia

mosaic n. a grouping of tiny colored stone cubes set in mortar to create a picture or design

mosque n. a Muslim place of worship

mother culture n. a civilization that greatly influences other civilizations

mound builder n. a Native American culture that built mounds and cities in the Mississippi River Valley region between 1000 BC. and A D.500

movable type n. the individual clay tablets that could be arranged on a board to form text

mummy n. the preserved body of a pharaoh or other powerful person in ancient Egypt

myth t an old story told to explain an event or justify a belief or action

mythology n. a collection of stories that explains events, beliefs, or actions

N

nation-state tr. a country with an independent government and a population united by a shared culture, language, and national pride; a political unit in which people have a common culture and identity

nirvana n. in Buddhism, a state of bliss or the end of suffering caused by the cycle of rebirth

noble n. a member of a high class in society who inherits his or her status

noh n. a form of drama that grew out of Japanese Shinto rituals and often retells well-known folktales

nomad n. a person who moves from place to place

O

oasis rt. a fertile place with water in a desert

oligarchy n. a government ruled by a few powerful citizens

ondol n. a Korean system of heating in which an outside fire heats thick stones set into a floor

oracle bone n. an animal bone used to consult with the many gods worshipped by the Shang people

oral history n. an unwritten account of events, often passed down through the generations as stories or songs

oral tradition n. the passage of spoken histories and stories from one generation to the next

oratory n. the art of public speaking

P

pantheon n. the gods of a group of people, a religion, or a civilization;

papyrus n. a paperlike material made from reeds

parable n. in the Bible, a simple story to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson

parliament n. a group of representatives who shared power with the English monarch

patriarch n. the leader of the Eastern Orthodox Church

patriarchy n. a society in which men hold all the power

patrician n. a wealthy landowner in ancient Rome

patron n. a wealthy person who financially supports and encourages an artist

peasant n. a poor farmer

peninsula n. a piece of land surrounded by water on three sides

perspective n. an artistic technique that produces an impression of depth and distance

phalanx tt. in ancient Greece and Rome, a battle formation in which soldiers stood close together to protect themselves from enemy attack

pharaoh tt. an ancient Egyptian ruler

philosophy tt. the study of the universe and our place in it

pilgrimage n. a journey to a holy place

plague n. a disease that causes many deaths

planned city n. a city built with a specific layout in mind

plantation tt. a large farm where slaves worked to grow and harvest crops

plebeian tt. a common person in ancient Rome

polis n. a Greek city-state

polytheism n. a belief in many gods

pope n. the leader of the Roman Catholic Church

porcelain tt. a strong, light, and translucent ceramic

potlach tt. a gift-giving ceremony practiced by the Kwakiutl and Haida Native American tribes

primary source an artifact or piece of writing that was created by someone who witnessed or lived through a historical event

printing press n. an invention that used movable metal type to print pages

prophet tt. a teacher believed to be inspired by God

province n. an administrative district of a larger empire or country

pyramid tt. a massive, monumental tomb for a pharaoh

Q

quarry v. to extract stone from the earth

quinine n. a substance from the bark of a tree that is an effective remedy for malaria

quinoa tt. a high-protein grain native to the Andes Mountains in South America

R

rabbi n. a Jewish spiritual leader

racism n. the belief that one race is better than others

raw material tt. a substance from which other things are made

record keeping n. the practice of organizing and storing information

reform n. a change to make a situation better

regent tt. a person who rules when a monarch or emperor is unable to do so
reincarnation n. in Hinduism, the rebirth of a person's soul into another body after death
religion tt. the belief in and worship of one or more gods and goddesses
Renaissance man n. a person who has a wide variety of skills and knowledge
representative democracy n. a form of democracy in which people are elected to vote on the citizens' behalf
republic n. a type of government in which citizens vote for their leaders
reunify v. to join together again
ritual n. a formal series of acts always performed in the same way; a religious ceremony
rivalry n. a competition

S

samurai n. a hired warrior in medieval Japan
satrap n. a governor of a province in the Persian Empire
savanna t an area of lush tropical grasslands
scarcity n. a small supply of something
schism n. a separation
scientific method tt. a logical procedure for developing and testing ideas
scientific rationalism n. a school of thought in which observation, experimentation, and mathematical reasoning replace ancient wisdom and church teachings as the source of scientific truth
scribe tt. a professional writer who recorded official information
secondary source n. an artifact or writing created after an event by someone who did not see it or live during the time when it occurred
secular adj. nonreligious
serf tt. a person who lived and worked on the private land of a noble or medieval lord
shah tt. a ruler of the Safavid Empire; the Persian title for "king"
shaman n. a medicine healer in Native American cultures
sharl'a n. an Islamic system of law that covers all aspects of human behavior
shogun n. the military ruler of medieval Japan
shogunate n. the rule by a shogun
siege n. a military tactic in which troops surround a city with soldiers in an attempt to take control of it
silk tt. a textile made from the cocoons of silkworms
silt n. an especially fine and fertile soil
slash-and-burn agriculture n. a method of clearing fields for planting

smallpox tt. a deadly virus that causes a high fever and small blisters on the skin
social class n. a category of people based on wealth or status in a society
specialized worker tt. a person who performs a job other than farming, such as metalworking or toolmaking
staple tt. a main crop produced in a specific place
steppe tt. a vast, grassy plain
subcontinent tt. a large, distinct landmass that is part of a continent
sultan n. a ruler of the Ottoman Empire
surplus adj. more than is required or necessary; extra
synagogue n. a Jewish place of worship

T

technology n. the application of knowledge, tools, and inventions to meet people's needs
temple n. a place of worship
terrace n. a stepped platform built into a mountainside
terrace farming n. a type of farming in which flat steps are cut into a mountain to provide farmland
terra cotta n. a fire-baked clay
tetrarchy n. a system of rule by four emperors
theory tt. a proposed explanation for a set of facts
tolerance n. the sympathy for the beliefs and practices of others
totem pole n. a tall, elaborately carved and painted tree trunk common in Northwest Coast native cultures
trade tt. the exchange of goods
tragedy n. a serious form of Greek drama in which characters endure suffering before an unhappy ending
trans-Saharan adj. across the Sahara
triangular trade tt. a transatlantic trade network formed by Europe, West Africa, and the Americas
tribe n. an extended family unit
tribune n. a representative who fought to protect the rights of ordinary citizens in ancient Rome
tribute tt. a tax paid or goods and services rendered in return for protection
trireme tt. an ancient Greek warship
truce t an agreement to stop fighting
tyrant n. in ancient Greek city-states, a ruler who took power illegally

V

vassal n. a person, usually a lesser nobleman, who received land and protection from a feudal lord in exchange for obedience and service

vernacular tt. a person's native language

veto v. to reject a decision or proposal made by another government body

vizier tt. a chief official in ancient Egypt who carried out much of the day-to-day work of governing

W

wigwam n. a domed tent used as housing by the Algonquin in North America

woodcut t an image carved on a block of wood

Y

Yoga n. a series of postures and breathing exercises

Z

ziggurat n. a pyramid-shaped temple in Sumerian city-states