

Substantive concepts in history

This is a list of key concepts you need to understand in history and could apply to any unit you study from year 7 to year 11. You should learn these terms and their spelling. You will be tested on them over the course of the time you study history.

Abbey- a large monastery

Abdicate: run away or resign from a formal position (eg a monarchy)

Abolition: banning/put an end to something

Activists: people acting to bring about change (eg political or social)

Agricultural- things to do with farming

Alliance: an agreement between two or more parties to support each other

Archbishop- a powerful church leader

Aristocracy: the highest class in certain societies, typically comprising people of noble birth holding hereditary titles and offices.

Archers- members of the army who used long bows/cross bows to fire arrows at the enemy

Army: an organised military force equipped for fighting on land.

Arms race: a race between countries to build up the biggest army with the best weapons

Assassinate: to kill a public figure (eg politician or monarch)

Authority: the power or right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience

Authority: a person or organisation which has political or administrative power and control.

Autocracy: a system of government by one person with absolute power.

Baron- a powerful lord who was granted land by the king

Battle- a single fight between two or more armies, it could last from a few hours to several days

Border: a line separating two countries.

Boycott: refuse to use or buy

Campaign: a series of military operations intended to achieve a goal, confined to a particular area, or involving a specified type of fighting.

Campaign: an organised course of action to achieve a goal e.g. win an election

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.

Cavalry- a section of an army on horseback usually leads the charge in a battle

Censored: controlled or banned

Chivalry: the medieval knightly system with its religious, moral, and social code.

Church: institutionalised religion as a political or social force.

Church: a building used for public Christian worship.

Civil liberties: the state of being subject only to laws established for the good of the community, especially with regard to freedom of action and speech.

Civil Rights: the rights of citizens to political and social freedom and equality.

Civil War: a war between citizens of the same country.

Civilian: a person not in the armed services or the police force.

Class: a system of ordering society whereby people are divided into sets based on perceived social or economic status.

Clergy- all the people appointed to do religious duties e.g. priests, monks, nuns

Colonialism: the policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically.

Colony: a country or area under the full or partial political control of another country and occupied by settlers from that country.

Communism: a theory or system of social organisation in which all property is owned by the community and each person contributes and receives according to their ability and needs.

Conflict: a prolonged armed struggle.

Conquest: taking control of a place or people by military force.

Coronation: the ceremony of crowning a sovereign

Court: the courtiers and household of a sovereign.

Conservative: averse to change or innovation and holding traditional values.

Constitution: a body of fundamental principles or established precedents according to which a state or other organisation is acknowledged to be governed.

Culture: the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time.

Democracy: a system of government where the whole population has the right to vote for their government in regular elections

Dictator: a ruler with total power over a country, typically one who has obtained control by force.

Dictatorship: a form of government where a country is entirely controlled by one person

Diplomacy: the profession, activity, or skill of managing international relations, typically by a country's representatives abroad.

Doctrine: a belief or set of beliefs held and taught by a Church, political party, or other group.

Earl: a powerful noble man

Earldom: the territory governed by an earl.

Economic sanction: commercial and financial penalties applied by one or more countries against a targeted country, group, or individual

Emperor: a sovereign ruler of an empire.

Empire: an extensive group of states or countries ruled over by a single monarch or a sovereign state.

Enemy: a person who is actively opposed or hostile to someone or something.

Excommunicated- this is when someone is banned from going to church or being a part of the Christian religion- a terrible punishment usually given by the Pope, in the Middle Ages as it meant you would go to hell when you died.

Export: transporting and selling goods that are made in Britain abroad

Famine: extreme scarcity of food.

Fascism: a form of government which is a type of one-party dictatorship. Fascists are against democracy. They work for a totalitarian one-party state.

Fascist: a person or political party with extreme right-wing views (often including racism, nationalism, and complete obedience to authority)

Feminism: the advocacy of women's rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes.

Feudal: absurdly outdated or old-fashioned.

Front line: the land nearest the enemy, where the fighting takes place

Fundamentalism: a form of a religion, especially Islam or Protestant Christianity, that upholds belief in the strict, literal interpretation of scripture.

General: a commander of an army, or an army officer of very high rank.

Gentry: people of good social position, specifically the class of people next below the nobility in position and birth.

Heir- the next in line to the throne

Heresy: belief or opinion contrary to orthodox religious (especially Christian) doctrine.

Heretic: a person believing in or practising religious heresy.

Hierarchy: a system in which members of an organisation or society are ranked according to relative status or authority.

Holy war: a war declared or waged in support of a religious cause.

House of Commons- representatives of ordinary people in Parliament

Human rights: the basic rights and freedoms to which all humans should be entitled

Import: when goods are brought into Britain from abroad

Indoctrinated: brainwashed into thinking a certain way

Immigration: the action of coming to live permanently in a foreign country.

Imperialism: a policy of extending a country's power and influence through colonization, use of military force, or other means.

Industrialisation: the development of industries in a country or region on a wide scale.

Invade- to bring an army into a country to try and control it

Judiciary: the judicial authorities of a country; judges collectively.

King: the male ruler of an independent state, especially one who inherits the position by right of birth

Knights- men who promised to fight for their lord

Latin- an ancient Roman language, still popular in the Middle Ages

Liberal: willing to respect or accept behaviour or opinions different from one's own; open to new ideas.

Liberty: the state of being free within society from oppressive restrictions imposed by authority on one's behaviour or political views.

Limited Monarchy: A government in which a monarch agrees to share power with a parliament and abide by a constitution; also known as a constitutional monarchy.

Loyalty- faithfulness; if a person promised loyalty, they promised to support someone

Medieval / Middle Ages- a period of time, usually from around AD 1000-1500

Merchant: a person or company involved in wholesale trade, especially one dealing with foreign countries or supplying goods to a particular trade.

Middle Class: the social group between the upper and working classes, including professional and business people and their families.

Migration: movement of people to a new area or country in order to find work or better living conditions.

Military: movement of people to a new area or country in order to find work or better living conditions.

Minister: a head of a government department

Minority: the number of votes cast for or by the smaller party in a government

Minority: a small group of people within a community or country, differing from the main population in race, religion, language, or political persuasion.

Monarch- the King or Queen

Monarchy: a form of government with a monarch at the head.

Monastery- A building where monks live

Monk: a member of a religious community of men typically living under vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

Munitions: weapons and ammunition

Nation: a large body of people united by common descent, history, culture, or language, inhabiting a particular state or territory.

Nationalism: an extreme form of patriotism marked by a feeling of superiority over other countries.

Nationality: the status of belonging to a particular nation.

Navy: the branch of the armed services of a state which conducts military operations at sea.

Neutral: a country is neutral if it does not side with countries involved in a conflict

Nobility: the quality of belonging to the aristocracy.

Nun: a member of a religious community of women, typically one living under vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

Pact: a formal agreement between countries/nations, a treaty

Parliament: the body of Lords and Commons set up to rule the country in the UK

Papacy: the office or authority of the Pope.

Patriot: a person who vigorously supports their country and is prepared to defend it against enemies or detractors.

Peace: a state or period in which there is no war or a war has ended.

Persecution: the regular mistreatment of one group of people by another group

Peasant: a poor smallholder or agricultural labourer of low social status

Pilgrimage: a journey to a place of particular interest or significance.

Political Party: is defined as an organised group of people with at least roughly similar political aims and opinions, that seeks to influence public policy by getting its candidates elected to public office.

Pope- the head/leader of the Catholic Church

Power: the ability or capacity to do something or act in a particular way.

President: the elected head of a republican state.

Prime Minister: the head of an elected government; the principal minister of a sovereign or state.

Propaganda: Information, usually false or misleading, given out to spread a certain point of view

Public: ordinary people in general; the community.

Queen: the female ruler of an independent state, especially one who inherits the position by right of birth.

Racism: prejudice or discrimination directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior.

Radical: a person who advocates thorough or complete political or social reform; a member of a political party or part of a party pursuing such aims.

Rearmament: building up armed forces and increasing stocks of weapons

Recession: a period of temporary economic decline during which trade and industrial activity are reduced

Reform: make changes in (something, especially an institution or practice) in order to improve it.

Regent: a person appointed to administer a state because the monarch is a minor or is absent or incapacitated.

Religion: a particular system of faith and worship.

Republic: a state in which supreme power is held by the people and their elected representatives, and which has an elected or nominated president rather than a monarch.

Resistance: the use of force or violence to oppose someone or something.

Retreating- an army that is retreating is going back because they realise they cannot win the battle

Revolt- another word for rebellion or uprising

Revolution: a dramatic and wide-reaching change in conditions, attitudes, or operation.

Rights: a moral or legal entitlement to have or do something.

Royal court: A royal court or noble court is a place where an important ruler such as a king, prince or duke live. The building is often called a palace, but the "royal court" means not just the buildings but all the royal household

Ruler: a person exercising government.

Saint- a person who, after they have died, is considered by the Church to be especially good

Slave: a person who is the legal property of another and is forced to obey them.

Socialism: a political and economic theory of social organisation which advocates that the means of production, distribution, and exchange should be owned or regulated by the community as a whole.

Society: people living together in a more or less ordered community.

Sovereignty: the authority of a state to govern itself or another state.

State: a nation or territory considered as an organized political community under one government.

Suffrage: the right to vote in political elections.

Tax: a compulsory contribution to state revenue, levied by the government on workers' income and business profits, or added to the cost of some goods, services, and transactions.

Terrorism: the unlawful use of violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims.

Totalitarian: relating to a system of government that is centralized and dictatorial and requires complete subservience to the state.

Total war: war that affected the whole country, not just the soldiers fighting but the people back at home

Trade: the action of buying and selling goods and services.

Trade union: an organised association of workers in a trade, group of trades, or profession, formed to protect and further their rights and interests.

Treason: to do something against the monarch such as try and take over or kill them

Treaty: a formally concluded and ratified agreement between states.

Tyranny: cruel and oppressive government or rule.

Usurper: a person who takes a position of power or importance illegally or by force.

Voyage: a long journey involving travel by sea or in space.

War: a state of armed conflict between different countries or different groups within a country.

Working Class: the social group consisting of people who are employed for wages, especially in manual or industrial work.