

Glossary

Some words in this book have been respelled to help you pronounce them. Respelled words have been adapted from *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition*; *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*; and *Random House Dictionary*.

Blue words are defined in the margins.

Black words are Academic Vocabulary terms.

A

abandon to leave someone or something without intending to return

accompany to join someone in going somewhere

accomplish to complete something successfully

accurately correctly, without any mistakes

achievement a positive result gained by hard work

acropolis the hill above a Greek city, on which temples were built

acquire to come into possession of something

adapt to make changes to an existing object or way or doing things

Aegean Sea an arm of the Mediterranean Sea, east of Greece

affect to produce a change in something or someone

afterlife an existence after death

agora a marketplace in ancient Greece

agriculture the business of farming; growing crops and raising animals

Alexander the Great the ruler of a vast empire that extended from Macedonia to India in the 300s B.C.E.

Alexandria a city in Egypt, founded in 332 B.C.E. by Alexander the Great; also, an ancient center of learning

alliance a bond between families, states, or other groups to further their common interests

ally a country that is friendly to another country in times of war

alms goods or money given to the poor

ancestor worship honoring of ancestors through rituals, such as offering food and wine to the spirits of the dead

anthropologist a scientist who studies human development and culture

Anyang location where ruins were found from the Shang dynasty, China's first civilization

appreciate to be aware of the worth and importance of something or someone

approach to move closer to someone or something

approximately a close estimate

aqueduct a pipe or channel built to carry water over a long distance

archaeologist an expert who studies the past by examining objects that people have left behind

aristocrat a member of the most powerful class in ancient Greek society

Aristotle a great Greek philosopher; a tutor of Alexander the Great; and the author of works on logic, science, and politics

artifact an object made or used by people in the past

artisan a craftsperson

ascetic a person who gives up worldly pleasure

Ashoka the ruler of the Mauryan Empire from about 269 to 232 B.C.E., whose edicts reflected Buddhist values

aspect one part of something

assemble to bring together

assembly a group of citizens, in an ancient Greek democracy, with the power to pass laws

astronomy the study of the stars and planets

Athens a city-state of ancient Greece that was first to have a democracy; also known as the birthplace of Western civilization; the capital of present-day Greece

authority the government or controlling power

axis a line on which an object spins

B

baptism the Christian sacrament that makes a person a member of the Christian Church

benefit something that improves someone's life

biology the study of living things; their structure, growth, and function

Brahmanism ancient ritual traditions in which Brahmins played a key role; it grew out of older Vedic religious beliefs and helped lead to Hinduism

brief a short length of time

bronze a strong metal alloy made from copper

Buddha a Sanskrit word meaning "enlightened"; the name given to the man who founded Buddhism

Buddhism the religion founded by Siddhartha, which teaches that life brings suffering that one can escape by seeking nirvana through enlightenment

bureaucracy a large, complex organization that functions under a given set of rules and conditions

Byzantine Empire the name for the eastern Roman Empire, located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia; it lasted from about 500 to 1453 C.E.

C

Caesar Augustus Julius Caesar's grandnephew and adopted son, Octavian; Rome's first emperor

Caesar, Julius a Roman general who ended the Roman Republic when he seized power and became dictator for life

Canaan a land northeast of Egypt, settled by the ancient Israelites, from about 1800 B.C.E. to 70 C.E.

capability ability or skill

capable having the ability or skill necessary to do something well

capital a city that is the center of government

capture to take by force

caravan a group of people traveling together

caste a class, or group, in Hindu society

Catal Hoyuk a Neolithic town discovered in central Turkey

cavalry soldiers who ride on horses

censor to remove or suppress ideas considered harmful or dangerous

challenge a task or problem that tests a person's abilities

channel a passage dug into the earth, through which liquids flow

chapter one section of a book

Christianity the religion based on the life and teachings of Jesus

Circus Maximus a large Roman stadium primarily used for chariot races

citadel a fortress built to protect a city

citizen a person who has certain rights and duties in a city-state or nation

city-state an early city that was like a small, independent country with its own laws and government

civic having to do with the community

civil servant a person who works for a government

civil war a war between groups in the same country

civilization a society marked by developed arts, sciences, government, and social structure

clan a large group of family members and friends

climate the average weather conditions at a particular place

code of laws a collection of written laws and rules

colony a settlement under the control of a usually distant country

collapse a sudden break down or failure

Colosseum a large arena in Rome where gladiator contests and other games and sporting events were held

column a tall, upright structure used to support a building. Some columns have carved decorations on them.

communicate to exchange or share thoughts, feelings, or information with people, using words, writings, or other methods

community a group of people who live in the same area and are united by common interests

complex arranged in a difficult way

complicate to make something more difficult and involved

conduct to carry out an activity in a particular way

conflict a disagreement or fight caused by opposing points of view

Confucianism a Chinese philosophy that emphasizes proper behavior

Constantine Roman emperor from about 280 to 337 C.E.; the first Roman emperor to become a Christian

constitution a set of basic laws

construct to build; usually some kind of structure, such as a house

consul one of two chief leaders in Rome

consult to get an opinion and information from someone

contrast the differences between people or things, when they are compared

contribute to give, along with others, to a common cause

convert someone who has changed their religious beliefs so they accept a different or new religion

convince to persuade someone that something is true

Council of 500 in Athens, a group of 500 citizens chosen to form a council responsible for running the day-to-day business of government

Council of Elders a small group of Spartans who made all the important governing decisions

covenant an agreement or promise

create to bring something new into being

crisis a dangerous moment with a high chance of an unwanted result

cultural diffusion the spreading of cultural traits, such as goods and ideas, from one culture to another, or within one culture

culture a characteristic of civilization that includes the beliefs and behaviors of a society or group of people

cuneiform writing that uses wedge-shaped characters

cuniculus an underground irrigation system invented by the Etruscans

custom a practice that is common to people of a particular group or region

cycle repeating events that occur regularly

D

Daoism a Chinese philosophy that emphasizes living in harmony with nature

Darius a great Persian king who ruled from about 522 to 486 B.C.E.

dedicate to honor someone by recognizing a place in their name

democracy a government in which power is held by the people, who exercise power directly or through elected representatives

deny to hold back and refuse something

design a pattern that is used for an artistic purpose

dharma a belief found in Hinduism and other Indian traditions that a person has a duty or obligation to live an honorable life

dictator a ruler with absolute power

disciple a person who helps spread the religious teachings of another

disperse to spread out

display to show something in a place where people can see it

dispute a strong disagreement

dissolve to separate into smaller pieces

diverse a group of people or elements with obvious differences between one another

divine heavenly or god-like

document a written work that contains important information

domesticate to train a wild animal to be useful to humans

dominate to have control or power over something

drain a pipe that is used to carry away flowing water, often dirty water

drama the art of writing, acting in, and producing plays

dramatic noticeable and remarkable

dynasty a family or group that rules for several generations

E

Eastern Orthodox Church a Christian church that grew out of Christianity in eastern Europe and present-day Turkey

economy the way a region or country uses resources to produce and sell or trade goods and services to meet people's needs and wants

edict a command that is obeyed like a law

efficiently working well; producing very little waste

Egypt a nation in northeast Africa, first settled around 3100 B.C.E.

Eightfold Path a key idea of Buddhism whereby followers should live their lives according to these eight teachings

elevate to raise

eliminate to completely remove or put an end to something

embrace to gladly take in ideas, beliefs, or opinions

emerge to come into existence

emphasis extra attention or importance placed on something

empire a large territory in which several groups of people are ruled by a single leader or government

enable to provide the means or ability to do something

enlightenment the state of gaining spiritual insight and finding universal truth; the goal of Buddhists

enormous great in size or degree

enrich to improve the quality of something

environment all of the physical surroundings in a place, including land, water, animals, plants, and climate

establish to create something secure and long-standing

estate land in the country that usually has a large house on it

estimate a guess as to the value or size of something

ethics a set of moral principles or values

Etruscan an ancient inhabitant of Etruria, a land in north and central Italy

Euphrates River one of the two largest rivers in Southwest Asia that flow from mountains in Turkey to the Persian Gulf

evaporate when a liquid such as water, turns into a vapor, or gas

eventually at a later time

execute to carry out

exile to banish or expel from one's own country or home

expand to grow larger

Exodus the escape of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery to freedom

F

factor something that influences or causes a result

feature an important part or characteristic of something

fertile able to grow crops well

Fertile Crescent an arc-shaped region in Southwest Asia, with rich soil

feudalism a system of government based on landowners and tenants

Forum the center of most of the important public activities of the city Rome and its empire

foundation the solid support on which things are built

Four Noble Truths the four basic doctrines, or principles, of Buddhism

frontier the part of a country that borders another country or territory

function the purpose of an object and how it's used

fundamental at the most basic level

G

generation a group of individuals around the same age, living at the same time

geographer an expert who studies and creates maps of Earth's natural and human-made features

geography the study of the features of Earth's surface

geometric having a form composed of one or a number of simple shapes, such as triangles, squares, or circles

geometry the branch of mathematics involving points, lines, planes, and figures

gladiator a person trained to fight for public entertainment

golden age a period of great happiness, prosperity, and achievement

Gospel an account of the life and teachings of Jesus; four of them are included in the New Testament of the Christian Bible

granary a place to store grain

Great Wall a stone-and-earth wall about 1,500 miles long, first built during the Qin dynasty to defend China's northern boundary

Greco-Roman having the characteristics of Roman culture with a strong Greek influence

Gupta Empire the empire covering much of northern India that was ruled by the Guptas from around 320 C.E. to around 550 C.E.

H

Han dynasty the dynasty that ruled China from about 206 B.C.E. to 220 C.E., the period following the Qin dynasty

Hatshepsut the first woman pharaoh of ancient Egypt

Hellespont a long, narrow body of water between Europe and the present-day country of Turkey

hieroglyph a symbol used in hieroglyphics, a system of writing developed around 3000 B.C.E.

Hinduism a religion that developed in India over many centuries; it traces its roots to older traditions, such as Vedic beliefs and Brahmanism

historian an expert who studies and records the past

Holy Communion a Christian sacrament in which bread and wine are consumed as memorials of Jesus's Last Supper with his disciples

hominid an early ancestor of humans

horror a feeling of great fear and surprise

hostile to act in a way that is unfriendly and angry toward a particular person or object

I

ignore to knowingly not pay attention to something or someone

immortal able to live forever

Indus valley civilization an early civilization, known for its advanced culture, that developed in the Indus River valley in India

industry a business that manufactures a particular product, such as silk

initial occurring first, or at the beginning

insist firmly and repeatedly stating a point of view

instruct to teach

intelligence a strong mental ability to reason and gain knowledge

intense a very strong effect

interpret to judge the meaning of written or spoken words or an event

interpretation the way in which someone understands something

interval a period of time between events

invader someone who forces entry into a place where they are unwanted

involve to be a part of something

irrigation a means of supplying land with water

isolate to set apart from other people or things

Israel the Israelites' kingdom; divided about 930 B.C.E. into two kingdoms called Judah and Israel

Israelite an early name for the Jewish people

J

Jerusalem the holiest city of the Jews; capital of the ancient kingdoms of Israel and then Judah

Jesus the founder of Christianity upon whose life and teachings the religion is based

Jewish Diaspora the scattering of the Jewish people outside their homeland, beginning in 586 B.C.E.

Jordan River a river in southwestern Asia that flows from the Lebanon Mountains, south through the Sea of Galilee, into the Dead Sea

Judaism the first religion to worship one God, developed among the ancient Israelites

K

kandake a powerful female leader who co-ruled Kush with her husband or sons

karma a belief found in Hinduism and other Indian traditions that the good and evil done in a past life determines the nature of that person's next life

Kush a society along the Nile River, south of Egypt, from about 2000 B.C.E. to 350 B.C.E.

L

laborer someone who does physical work

Latin the language originally spoken in ancient Rome, on which many words in modern languages are based

latitude a measure of how far north or south a place on Earth is measured from the equator

layer a substance that lies between or above other things

Legalism a Chinese philosophy that emphasizes strict obedience to laws

leisure time spent not working

levee a wall of earth built to prevent a river from flooding its banks

link to connect two or more people or things

longitude a measure of how far east or west a place on Earth is from an imaginary line that runs between the North and South Poles

luxury a way of life that offers much more than what is necessary

M

Macedonia an ancient kingdom located north of Greece

maintain to keep something in good condition by making necessary repairs

major very important

Mandate of Heaven a power or law believed to be granted by a god

material a resource that can be used to make something else

mathematics the study of numbers

Mauryan Empire an empire lasting from about 322 to 187 B.C.E., during which the Mauryan family unified India for the first time

medical relating to the practice and treatment of medicine

Mediterranean Sea a body of water north of Africa

merchant a person who makes money by selling goods

Meroë a city on the Nile River that became the center of Kushite culture and industry

Mesopotamia in ancient times, the geographic area located between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers

Messiah a savior who many Jews believe had been promised to them by God

migrate to move from one geographic region to another

military relating to the army

missionary someone who tries to convert others to believe in a particular religion or set of beliefs

Mohenjodaro one of the first major settlements in ancient India that became a center of the Indus valley civilization

monarchy a government in which the ruling power is in the hands of one person

monotheism the belief that there is only one God

monsoon a strong wind that brings heavy rain to southern Asia in the summer

muscle body tissue that connects bones and provides strength

myth a traditional story that helps explain a culture's beliefs

N

natural law the concept that there is a universal order built into nature that can guide moral thinking

navy the part of a nation's military that fights at sea

Neolithic Age the later part of the Stone Age, called the New Stone Age, lasted from around 8000 B.C.E. to 3000 B.C.E.

network an interconnected system of channels or lines

neutral not taking sides or getting involved in disagreements

Nile River the longest river in the world, flowing through eastern Africa to a delta in northeastern Egypt

nirvana an ideal state of happiness and peace

noble of high birth or rank

nomad one who moves from place to place with no permanent home

North China Plain a region in the Huang He River valley, where Chinese civilization began

O

oasis a place, usually in a desert, where water can be found

obtain to get something, usually by making an effort or working for it

occupy to take up or fill

occur to take place

oligarchy a government in which the ruling power is in the hands of a few people

oracle bone a piece of bone or shell heated and cracked by holy men to seek advice from a king's ancestors

oxygen a gas in the air that people and animals need to breathe to live

P

Paleolithic Age the first period of the Stone Age, called the Old Stone Age, from about 2 million years ago to around 8000 B.C.E.

Panathenaic Games athletic events, including horse races and chariot races, held as part of the festival called Panathenaea, honoring the goddess Athena

parable a simple story that explains a moral or religious lesson

Parthenon the temple built on the acropolis above Athens, honoring the goddess Athena

participate to take part in something, such as a game or activity

paterfamilias the oldest male of a Roman household; his word was law for the family

patrician in the Roman Republic, a member of the upper, ruling class

patron a person who promotes artistic activities by paying for new works and supporting artists

Pax Romana a 200-year period of peace and stability established and maintained by the Roman Empire

peasant a person who does farm work for wealthy landowners

Peloponnesus a peninsula forming the southern part of the mainland of Greece

peninsula a body of land that is surrounded on three sides by water

Pericles a great leader who developed Athens's culture, democracy, and power during its Golden Age

period a length of time

Peloponnesian War (431 to 404 B.C.E.) the war fought between Athens and Sparta that involved other city-states

Persian Empire a vast empire in the 400s B.C.E. that ruled over lands in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia

Persian wars (490–479 B.C.E.) the period of fighting waged between the Persian Empire and the allied Greek city-states for control of land in Greece

pharaoh a ruler of ancient Egypt

philosophy a theory or set of values by which one lives; the search for wisdom and knowledge

physical of or related to natural science

plebeian in the Roman Republic, one of the common people

pictograph a symbol that stands for an object

pilgrimage a journey to a holy place

plateau a flat area of land that is elevated, or raised, above the land around it

plot a secret plan made for a specific purpose, to bring about a certain outcome

polytheism the belief that there are many gods

portion a part of a larger whole

prediction a guess as to what will happen in the future

prehistoric before written history

principle a strong belief on the right way to act

professional someone who is trained in a particular career

project a planned undertaking

promote to help something grow or prosper

prosperity a situation of wealth and success

Protestant any member of a Christian church founded on the principles of the Reformation

province a territory that is part of a country or an empire

publish something that is written and distributed

Punic Wars a series of wars fought between Rome and Carthage for control of the Mediterranean

pursue to follow; as in a goal or purpose

Q

Qin Shihuangdi the first emperor to rule a united China, from 221 to 210 B.C.E.

R

Ramses II an ancient Egyptian pharaoh, known as “Ramses the Great”; skilled as a military leader; and responsible for building many monuments, including the temple at Abu Simbel

rectangular having the shape of a rectangle

reform to improve a system or organization

region a part or section of a country

reign the period of time someone rules, usually royalty

reincarnation the belief that a person’s soul is reborn into a new body after death

reject to refuse to have or accept

release to let go of something being held

reluctant to have hesitation or an unwillingness to do something

rely to depend on something or someone

Renaissance a great flowering of culture based on classical Greek and Roman ideas that began in Italy around 1300 and spread throughout Europe

republic a form of government in which leaders are elected to represent the people

require to have to do something based on a rule or command

researcher someone who searches for information on a particular subject

resource something that can be used to fulfill a need

Resurrection in Christian belief, Jesus’s rise from the dead

reveal to show something that had been hidden

reverse to act or decide in a way that is the opposite of what has been established

revolt a violent action in opposition of a government or law

rigid stiff; unable to bend

ritual relating to a ceremony, such as a religious ceremony

role a position based on socially expected behavior

Roman Catholic Church a Christian church headed by the pope in Rome

Rome the capital city of the Roman civilization, founded about 700 B.C.E.

rule of law the idea that people should live according to a set of agreed-upon laws

S

sacrament a sacred rite, or ritual, of Christian churches

salvation being saved from sin; in Christianity, to be specifically saved by Jesus, the source of salvation

Sanskrit an ancient Indian language

scribe a person who writes

seek to actively search for something or someone

select to choose from a group, based on a liking for one over another

Senate a group of 300 men elected to govern Rome

series a number of like things ordered one after another

Shang dynasty one of the first Chinese dynasties, ruled from 1700 to 1122 B.C.E.

sibling a brother or sister

siege a military blockade and attack on a city to force it to surrender

Silk Road a network of trade routes that stretched for more than four thousand miles across Asia

silt fine particles of rock

skeleton the bones that make up the body of a person or animal

slavery the state of a person who is treated as the property of another

social class a group in a society that is ranked by factors such as wealth, property, and rights

social pyramid a pyramid outline showing the positions of social classes according to their status in a society

social structure the way a civilization is organized

Socrates a great ancient Greek philosopher who taught by asking his students thought-provoking questions

source the place or point where something starts

Sparta a city-state of ancient Greece, known for its military oligarchy

specific exact and detailed

standardize to make the same

status importance

Stoicism a philosophy that flourished in ancient Greece and Rome and that focused on developing virtue, self-control, and courage as a way to achieve happiness

strategy a planned approach

stress to place importance on something

structure something that has been built

subcontinent a large landmass that is smaller than a continent

superior better; in rank or quality

supreme the highest ruling level

survive to live through a difficult experience

suspend to hang something in the air from a single point of support

Sumer an area in southern Mesopotamia, where cities first appeared

symbol a character or picture that is used to represent something else

symbolize to use a character or picture to represent something else

T

Talmud the collection of ancient Jewish writings, or commentaries, that interpret the laws and teachings of the Hebrew Bible, or Tanakh

technique a skilled way of doing something

technology the use of tools and other inventions for practical purposes

temporary for a limited time

Ten Commandments ten laws and teachings said to have been given to Moses by God

texture the characteristics of an object's surface that can be identified by feeling or viewing it

theory a proposed explanation for something

Tigris River one of the two largest rivers in Southwest Asia that flow from mountains in Turkey to the Persian Gulf

topography the shape and elevation of surface features, such as mountains or deserts, of a place or region

Torah Judaism's most sacred text, consisting of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible

trait a special feature or characteristic

trade the business of buying and selling or exchanging items

trade route a network of roads along which traders traveled

tradition an inherited or customary pattern of thought, action, or behavior

transfer to move from one person or place to another

transform to change in appearance or character

transport to move goods or people from one place to another

treaty a written agreement by which two or more states agree to peaceful relations

tribune an official of Rome elected by plebeians to represent them

tributary a stream or river that feeds into a larger stream, river, or lake

tribute wealth sent from one country or ruler to another as a sign that the other is superior

Trinity in Christianity, the unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three beings in one God

triumphal arch a large monument in the shape of an arch that celebrates a leader or a military victory

tyranny a government in which absolute ruling power is held by a person who is not a lawful king

U

ultimate something that cannot be outdone

unify to join together

unique one of a kind

V

vast a very large area

Vedas a collection of ancient writings viewed as sacred by many Hindus

vegetation the plants of a place or region

veto to refuse to approve proposals of government

vision the idea someone has for the way something should be

volume the amount of space an object fills

W

widespread spread out over a large area or among many people

X

Xerxes son of Darius, and ruler of Persia from 486 to 465 B.C.E.; eventually defeated by the Greeks at the end of the Persian wars

Y

Yavneh an ancient city in Israel that became a center for Jewish learning

yin and yang the Daoist concept of opposing forces of nature

Z

Zhou dynasty a line of rulers in China, from about 1045 to 256 B.C.E.

ziggurat an ancient Mesopotamian temple tower with outside staircases and a shrine at the top