

1. Primary Source

Definition: Original documents or objects created during the time period being studied.

Example: The Declaration of Independence (1776), a diary from World War II, or a Roman coin.

2. Secondary Source

Definition: Works that analyze, interpret, or summarize historical events, often using primary sources.

Example: A history textbook or a biography of Abraham Lincoln.

3. Historiography

Definition: The study of how history is written and how interpretations of events change over time.

Example: Comparing how different historians view the causes of the French Revolution.

4. Chronology

Definition: The arrangement of events in the order they occurred.

Example: A timeline of the American Civil War (1861–1865).

5. Bias

Definition: A preference or prejudice that influences historical accounts.

Example: A British colonial officer's diary might downplay the negative effects of imperialism.

6. Archaeology

Definition: The study of past human societies through material remains.

Example: Excavating ancient Egyptian tombs to learn about burial practices.

7. Oral History

Definition: Historical information gathered through interviews with people who experienced past events.

Example: Recording survivors' stories from the Holocaust.

8. Civilization

Definition: A complex society with cities, government, religion, and written language.

Example: Ancient Mesopotamia (one of the earliest civilizations).

9. Empire

Definition: A group of nations or peoples under a single ruling authority.

Example: The Roman Empire or the British Empire.

10. Revolution

Definition: A sudden, radical change in government or society.

Example: The Russian Revolution (1917), which overthrew the Tsar.

11. Colonialism

Definition: The policy of acquiring and controlling foreign territories for economic and political gain.

Example: Spain colonizing Latin America in the 16th century.

12. Imperialism

Definition: Extending a country's power through diplomacy or military force.

Example: European powers dividing Africa in the late 19th century.

13. Monarchy

Definition: A form of government with a king or queen as the ruler.

Example: The British monarchy under Queen Victoria.

14. Democracy

Definition: A system where citizens participate in government, often through voting.

Example: Ancient Athens (first democracy) or the United States.

15. Feudalism

Definition: A medieval European system where lords granted land to vassals in exchange for military service.

Example: Medieval England under William the Conqueror.

16. Renaissance

Definition: A period of cultural and intellectual revival in Europe (14th–17th centuries), marking the transition from the Middle Ages to modernity.

Example: Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa or Michelangelo's David.

17. Industrial Revolution

Definition: The shift from agrarian economies to industrialized production (late 18th–19th centuries), driven by technological innovations.

Example: The invention of the steam engine by James Watt.

18. Nationalism

Definition: A strong identification with one's nation, often leading to movements for independence or political dominance.

Example: Indian nationalism under Gandhi against British rule.

19. Cold War

Definition: Political tension between the U.S. and Soviet Union (1947–1991) without direct military conflict.

Example: The Cuban Missile Crisis (1962).

20. Decolonization

Definition: The process by which colonies gained independence from imperial powers (mid-20th century).

Example: Algeria's independence from France (1962).

21. Propaganda

Definition: Biased or misleading information used to promote a political cause or ideology.

Example: Nazi anti-Semitic posters during WWII.

22. Cultural Diffusion

Definition: The spread of cultural beliefs, technologies, or practices between societies.

Example: The Silk Road spreading Buddhism from India to China.

23. Dynasty

Definition: A sequence of rulers from the same family.

Example: The Ming Dynasty in China (1368–1644).

24. Genocide

Definition: Deliberate, systematic destruction of an ethnic, religious, or national group.

Example: The Armenian Genocide (1915–1917) by the Ottoman Empire.

25. Revolution (Scientific/Agricultural)

Definition: Radical changes in scientific thought or farming practices that transform societies.

Example: Copernicus' heliocentric theory (Scientific Revolution) or crop rotation (Agricultural Revolution).

26. Treaty

Definition: A formal agreement between nations to resolve conflicts or establish terms.

Example: The Treaty of Versailles (1919) ending WWI.

27. Apartheid

Definition: A system of institutionalized racial segregation (e.g., South Africa, 1948–1994).

Example: Nelson Mandela's imprisonment and the anti-apartheid movement.

28. Enlightenment

Definition: An 18th-century intellectual movement emphasizing reason, science, and individual rights.

Example: John Locke's Two Treatises of Government.

29. Migration

Definition: Movement of people from one region to another, often due to economic or political factors.

Example: The Great Migration of African Americans from the U.S. South to Northern cities (1916–1970).

30. Historiographical Debate

Definition: Disagreements among historians about the interpretation of events.

Example: Was the fall of the Roman Empire due to internal decay or external invasions?

Sourcing: Evaluating the origin and reliability of a historical document.

Contextualization: Understanding events within their historical setting.

Corroboration: Comparing multiple sources to verify facts.

31. Hegemony

Definition: Dominance of one group over others, often through cultural, economic, or political means.

Example: U.S. hegemony in the late 20th century as a global superpower.

32. Absolutism

Definition: A system where a ruler holds total power, often justified by divine right.

Example: Louis XIV of France ("L'État, c'est moi").

33. Bourgeoisie

Definition: The capitalist/middle class that owns means of production (Marxist term).

Example: Factory owners during the Industrial Revolution.

34. Proletariat

Definition: The working class who sell labor for wages (Marxist term).

Example: Textile workers in 19th-century Manchester, England.

35. Total War

Definition: Conflict where nations mobilize all resources, targeting civilians and infrastructure.

Example: World War II (e.g., bombing of Dresden).

36. Manifest Destiny

Definition: 19th-century U.S. belief in its divine right to expand westward.

Example: Annexation of Texas (1845).

37. Pax Romana

Definition: A period of Roman peace and stability (27 BCE–180 CE).

Example: Emperor Augustus' reign.

38. Schism

Definition: A formal split within a religion or organization.

Example: The Great Schism (1054) dividing Christianity into Catholic and Orthodox.

39. Mercantilism

Definition: Economic policy where colonies enrich the mother country via trade surpluses.

Example: British Navigation Acts (1651–1673).

40. Social Darwinism

Definition: Misapplication of Darwin's theories to justify racism/imperialism.

Example: European "civilizing mission" in Africa.

41. Oligarchy

Definition: Rule by a small, elite group.

Example: Medieval Venice's merchant aristocracy.

42. Coup d'État

Definition: Sudden, illegal seizure of government power by a small group.

Example: Napoleon's 18 Brumaire coup (1799).

43. Diaspora

Definition: Scattering of a people from their homeland.

Example: The Jewish diaspora after the Roman destruction of Jerusalem (70 CE).

44. Luddite

Definition: Protesters against industrial automation (early 19th century).

Example: English textile workers destroying machinery (1811–1816).

45. Realpolitik

Definition: Politics based on practical goals, not ideals.

Example: Otto von Bismarck's unification of Germany.

46. Theocracy

Definition: Government ruled by religious leaders.

Example: Ancient Egypt (Pharaoh as god-king) or Iran (since 1979).

47. Autarky

Definition: Economic self-sufficiency, often to avoid foreign dependence.

Example: Nazi Germany's pre-WWII policies.

48. Iconoclasm

Definition: Destruction of religious images/symbols for ideological reasons.

Example: Byzantine Iconoclasm (8th–9th centuries).

49. Gerrymandering

Definition: Manipulating electoral district boundaries for political advantage.

Example: U.S. *Elbridge Gerry's 1812 salamander-shaped district*.

50. Historical Materialism

Definition: Marx's theory that economic systems shape societal structures.

Example: Feudalism → Capitalism → Socialism.

Key Historical Concepts

Agency: The capacity of individuals/groups to act independently in history.

Contingency: The idea that events depend on prior conditions (no inevitability).

Periodization: Dividing history into distinct eras (e.g., "Middle Ages").

Ancient History Terminologies

1. Cuneiform

Definition: One of the earliest systems of writing, using wedge-shaped marks on clay tablets.

Example: Code of Hammurabi (Babylon, 1754 BCE).

2. Pharaoh

Definition: The divine ruler of ancient Egypt.

Example: Ramses II (ruled 1279–1213 BCE).

3. Polis

Definition: A Greek city-state, the basic political unit of ancient Greece.

Example: Athens (democratic polis) vs. Sparta (militaristic polis).

4. Hellenistic

Definition: The period of Greek cultural spread after Alexander the Great (323–31 BCE).

Example: Library of Alexandria (Egypt).

5. Republic

Definition: A government where power rests with citizens who elect leaders.

Example: Roman Republic (509–27 BCE).

6. Pax Mongolica

Definition: The peace and stability under the Mongol Empire (13th–14th centuries).

Example: Silk Road trade flourished under Kublai Khan.

7. Mandate of Heaven

Definition: Chinese belief that rulers were chosen by divine approval.

Example: Zhou Dynasty justifying their overthrow of the Shang (1046 BCE).

8. Ziggurat

Definition: A stepped pyramid temple in ancient Mesopotamia.

Example: Ziggurat of Ur (c. 2100 BCE).

9. Edict

Definition: An official order or proclamation by a ruler.

Example: Ashoka's Edicts (Mauryan Empire, 3rd century BCE).

10. Silk Road

Definition: A network of trade routes connecting Asia and Europe.

Example: Silk, spices, and Buddhism spread between China and Rome.

Modern Era History Terminologies

1. Enlightenment

Definition: An 18th-century intellectual movement emphasizing reason and science.

Example: Voltaire's critiques of the Church.

2. Industrialization

Definition: The shift from agrarian economies to machine-based manufacturing.

Example: Cotton mills in Manchester (1800s).

3. Nationalism

Definition: Loyalty to a nation, often leading to independence movements.

Example: Italian unification (Risorgimento, 1861).

4. Imperialism

Definition: Extending a nation's power through colonization or domination.

Example: British rule over India (1858–1947).

5. Capitalism

Definition: An economic system based on private ownership and profit.

Example: Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations" (1776).

6. Communism

Definition: A classless society where property is publicly owned (Marxist theory).

Example: Soviet Union (1917–1991).

7. Totalitarianism

Definition: A regime that controls all aspects of public and private life.

Example: Nazi Germany (1933–1945).

8. Cold War

Definition: Geopolitical tension between the U.S. and USSR (1947–1991).

Example: Space Race (Sputnik vs. Apollo missions).

9. Decolonization

Definition: The process of colonies gaining independence post-WWII.

Example: India's independence from Britain (1947).

10. Globalization

Definition: The interconnectedness of economies, cultures, and politics worldwide.

Example: The rise of multinational corporations (e.g., Apple, Toyota).

Feudalism → Capitalism (Medieval to Modern economies).

Divine Right → Democracy (Shift in political legitimacy).

Guilds → Trade Unions (Pre-industrial to industrial labor organization).