

# 0: INTRODUCTION

## ESSENTIAL TERMS



### PEOPLE AND GROUPS

**Pilgrims:** English Separatists who founded the Plymouth Colony. They lived in the Netherlands briefly before coming to America on the Mayflower.

**Puritans:** English followers of John Calvin who wanted to fix problems with the Church of England. They founded the Massachusetts Bay Colony and were led by John Winthrop.

**Thomas Jefferson:** Author of the Declaration of Independence and later third president.

**George Washington:** Virginia planter, surveyor, officer in the Seven Years War, leader of the Continental Army in the Revolution, President of the Constitutional Congress and First President of the United States.

**James Madison:** Father of the Constitution and later 5th President.

**Founding Fathers:** The American leaders who led the nation through the Revolution, establishment of the new government, and in the first years of the Constitution. They include George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, James Madison, Benjamin Franklin and Alexander Hamilton.

**Abraham Lincoln:** President during the Civil War. He started the process to end slavery. Many people think he was our nation's greatest president.



### LOCATIONS

**Jamestown:** First successful English colony in America. Settled in 1607, John Smith helped save the settlers from starvation. Eventually the colony became financially successful when John Rolfe learned to grow quality tobacco in Virginia's soil.

**Massachusetts Bay Colony:** Colony created by Puritans in 1630. It was centered around the city of Boston and eventually absorbed Plymouth.

**Confederate States of America:** Also called the Confederacy – the slave-holding states from the South that seceded.



### KEY CONCEPTS

**Triangle Trade:** The trade of slaves, raw materials and finished products between Africa, Europe, the Caribbean and the British Colonies.

**Chattel Slavery:** System of slavery in which the slaves are considered property with no individual rights.

**No Taxation Without Representation:** Idea that the government should not levy taxes unless the people who must pay those taxes have the opportunity to elect members of that government.

**Manifest Destiny:** Belief held by many Americans, especially in the 1800s that it was clear that the nation would spread from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. This belief fueled expansion, including migration of pioneers, war with Mexico and Native Americans, and a belief in the superiority of White, Christian culture.

**Abolition:** The movement to end slavery.

**The Underground Railroad:** The antebellum volunteer resistance movement that assisted slaves in escaping to freedom. Although it was not a railroad, the participants of the system used railroad terminology. Safe places for escaped slaves to stay were called stations and the people who guided the slaves were conductors.

**Jim Crow:** The nickname for a system of laws that enforced segregation. For example, African Americans had separate schools, rode in the backs of busses, could not drink from White drinking fountains, and could not eat in restaurants or stay in hotels, etc.



### LAWS

**Declaration of Independence:** Statement passed by the Second Continental Congress on July 4, 1776 officially stating that the United States was independent from Britain.

**Constitution:** The document that explains how the government works.

**Bill of Rights:** The first ten amendments to the Constitution. Ratified in 1791, they outline essential freedoms of all citizens.

**Emancipation Proclamation:** President Lincoln's official order freeing all slaves in the rebelling territories (but not in the Border States that had remained in the Union).

**13th, 14th and 15th Amendments:** The three amendments to the Constitution ratified after the Civil War during Reconstruction. They ended slavery, gave citizenship to anyone born in the United States, and gave voting rights to all men.



### EVENTS

**Enlightenment:** Time period in Europe and America in the 1700s characterized by an increased interest in science, new ideas about government and power, and a focus on order inspired by Classical Greece and Rome

**Shot Heard 'Round the World:** Nickname for the opening battles of the American Revolution, so called because they inspired other Revolutionaries around the world.

**July 4, 1776:** The day the Declaration of Independence was signed. It is celebrated as America's Independence Day.

**Louisiana Purchase:** 1803 purchase of land from France by President Jefferson which doubled the size of the nation. It was an example of a loose interpretation of the Constitution despite Jefferson's preference for strict interpretation.

**Texas Revolution:** War between American-born Texans and the Mexican government under the command of Santa Anna in 1835 and 1836 that resulted in independence for Texas. It was fought largely due to disagreements about culture, language, religion and especially slavery.

**Mexican-American War:** War between the United States and Mexico between 1846 and 1848. It was a major victory for the United States and the subsequent Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo resulted in the Mexican Cession, the land that became the modern states of New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, California and part of Utah.

**Civil War:** War between the Northern and Southern states from 1861-1865 about slavery. The North, or Union, won the war and slavery ended.

**Battle of Gettysburg:** The turning point battle of the war. Lee led his army into Pennsylvania hoping to force the North to give up but lost the battle.

**Reconstruction:** The time period after the Civil War ended when the North tried to remake the society of the South. During this time important amendments were passed, but in the end many things didn't change.