**World History Terms**

**A**

**Dante Aligheri**: Italian renaissance author/poet who wrote The Divine Comedy, about a journey through the afterlife, starting with The Inferno, about a guided tour of hell. He put all of his enemies in hell in his story, even if they hadn’t died yet.

**American Civil War: a war involving a confederacy of southern, slave-owning American states trying to declare independence from Abraham Lincoln’s Northern government, which was bringing an end to slavery.**

**American Revolution: an uprising of British colonies in North America demanding independence from Britain**

**Amish**: 18th century anabaptist religious community which formed isolationist, anti-technology communities in America and Canada.

**Anabaptism: an offshoot of mainstream Protestantism represented by groups such as Amish, Mennonite and Hutterites.**

**Anglo-Spanish War: military action, mainly at sea, between Britain (led by Oliver Cromwell) and Spain, fighting over commercial trade routes and colonies. Involved a lot of pirates.**

**Marie Antoinette**: German-born queen of France who had her head cut off during the French Revolution. Did not say “Let them eat cake.”

**Atahualpa**: the last Incan emperor, taking power after killing his brother, until dying when Francisco Pizarro first captured and controlled, then eventually executed him.

**Aztecs**: South American empire characterized by human sacrifice and impressive pyramid-building, conquered by Spanish conquistadors.

**B**

**Johann Sebastian Bach**: a successful composer of Baroque music, known for instrumental compositions such as the *Art of Fugue*, the *Brandenburg Concertos*, and the *Goldberg Variations*

**Francis Bacon:** English philosopher and statesman, who served as Attorney General and as Lord Chancellor of England. Credited with developing the scientific method.

**John Bunyan: British preacher and writer who wrote *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, an allegorical tale of a character named Christian journeying to the Celestial City and avoiding distractions and detours by characters with names like Slothful and Obstinate.**

**Baroque Art: art movement after the renaissance characterized by high contrast, photo realism and theatrical emotional content.**

**Baroque Music:** period of music falling between the Renaissance and Classical eras. Successful composers include Johann Sebastian Bach, Antonio Vivaldi and Johann Pachelbel.

**Ludwig von Beethoven**: German classical composer and pianist who suffered hearing loss late in his career. Famous for his *Fifth Symphony* and “Moonlight Sonata.”

**Boer War: at the end of the 19th century, a war involving Britain sending in troops to maintain control over European control of South Africa, while factions of local Boer people fought back. The Boers were successful until Britain sent sufficient troops.**

**Anne Boleyn**: unfortunate wife of King Henry VIII who was beheaded so he could remarry.

**Napoleon Bonaparte**: French general and strategist who used the chaos of the French Revolution to conquer it and much of Europe, eventually declaring himself emperor before being overthrown and exiled. Twice.

**Boston Massacre:** 18th century confrontation in which British soldiers shot and killed several people while being harassed by a mob in Boston. The event was heavily publicized by leading Patriots such as Paul Revere and Samuel Adams

**Boston Tea Party:** provocative action taken by the Sons of Liberty, who destroyed a shipment of tea imported tax-free from China by dumping it into the harbor in their Massachusetts city.

**bourgeoisie**: French term for the middle class.

**C**

**John Calvin:** a French leader of the Protestant Reformation who developed the “TULIP” model of Christian theology, saying people are naturally selfish and bad without God.

**Cape Hope:** Dutch settlement on the southernmost part of Africa while finding a route around Africa to India and Asia.

**Catherine the Great:** Russia’s longest-ruling female leader. She came to power following a *coup d'état* when her husband, Peter III, was overthrown. Under her reign, Russia was revitalized; it grew larger and stronger and was recognized as one of the great powers of Europe. Famously promiscuous, like most powerful people.

**Catholic Reformation: another word for the Counter-Reformation, or Catholic restructuring of itself following the Protestant Reformation.**

**Miguel de Cervantes:** Spanish poet who wrote *Don Quixote*, a comedic story about a near-sighted old man who wants to be a knight, long after knights were a thing, trying to joust with windmills and so on.

**Charles I**: British monarch who interfered with democratic processes and was beheaded.

**Charles II**: British monarch who was put on the throne after a brief kingless period following his father being beheaded by his subjects.

**Charlotte Corday:** political extremist during the French Revolution who assassinated publisher Jean-Paul Marat while he was taking a medicinal bath for his skin with a kitchen knife she had hidden in her corset.

**child labour:** common practice during the Industrial Revolution when education wasn’t a priority and cities were filled with people who needed food.

**Common Sense:** title of a pamphlet written and published by Thomas Paine, arguing for independence from Europe for British colonies in North America.

**Oliver Cromwell**: British citizen who refused to be king in the place of the beheaded king Charles I, but who ruled the country as a commoner until a new king was crowned.

**George Custer: Civil War veteran who famously was killed with all of his men by a coalition of indigenous forces at the Battle of** Little Bighorn while commanding the 7th cavalry unit of the United States Army.

**Battle of Concord:** second military engagement after the Boston Tea Party, with British soldiers killed by militia men who were massing from nearby towns.

**Hernán Cortés:** Spanish conquistador who caused the fall of the Aztec Empire and purchased much of what is now Mexico.

**Crimean War: three-years-long, 19th century conflict** in which the Tsarist Russian Empire eventually lost to an alliance of the Ottoman Empire, France, Britain and Sardinia, who didn’t want to allow Russia to simply exploit the weakening Ottoman Empire, and gain too much power.

**D**

**Renee Descartes**: French philosopher, mathematician, and scientist whose work linked algebra and geometry. Famously sought to prove his own existence by saying "I think, therefore I am"

**Charles Dickens:** wildly popular Victorian author who wrote serialized stories for magazines, often involving the plight of unfortunate orphan children during the Industrial Revolution. Wrote *A Christmas Carol* and *Oliver Twist.*

**E**

**East India Company**: an English and later British joint-stock company formed to trade in the Indian Ocean region. The company ended up seizing control over large parts of the Indian subcontinent, colonised parts of Southeast Asia, and colonised Hong Kong after a war with Qing China.

**Edict of Nantes: decree by the King of France allowing Calvinist French Protestants to practice their faith**

**Elizabeth I:** powerful and successful British monarch who took the throne after having her sister killed, once their father Henry VIII died without a male heir.

**Emancipation Proclamation:** law put into effect by Abraham Lincoln’s government to end slavery in the American south.

**English Civil War: the military action which culminated in England beheading her king**

**Enlightenment: term applied to the late 17th and 18th century, referring to society being increasingly led by philosophy and science rather than spiritual or emotional concerns.**

**F**

**First World War: first 20th century war involving most of Europe and newly industrialized methods of killing. Fighting over borders.**

**Five Nations Confederacy:** historically powerful 18th century northeast Indigenous confederacy. They were known during the colonial years to the French as the Iroquois League, comprising the Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneida, Cayuga, and Seneca.

**Florence: city in Italy that was at the center of the Renaissance**

**Benjamin Franklin**: leader in the American Revolution, invented bifocal spectacles, lightning rods and the Franklin stove, among other things.

**French Revolution: an uprising to overthrow Louis XVI of France that involved a large number of beheadings and the implementation of the metric system for everything including months and days of the week. Also, canceling Christmas.**

**French/Indian War**: the military action in what is now Canada, involving indigenous people fighting against the rule of France

**G**

**Galileo Galilei:** Italian astronomer, physicist and engineer whose contributions to observational astronomy include the telescopic confirmation of the phases of Venus, the observation of the four largest satellites of Jupiter, the observation of Saturn and the analysis of sunspots.

**Glorious Revolution: a revolution involving British parliamentarians inviting Dutch forces, including William of Orange, to come overthrow their current monarch, the Catholic-friendly King James II**

**Goethe**: 18th century German writer most famous for writing *Faust*, a story about a man selling his soul to the devil for fame and power.

**Olympe de Gouges:** playwright and advocate for women’s rights and the end of slavery. Guillotined during the Terror.

**Ulysses S. Grant**: union general who won the North control over the south in the American Civil War

**Grey Owl:** the name British-born ArchibaldBelaney chose for himself when he started pretending to be an Indigenous author rather like Joseph Boyden. While he achieved fame as a conservationist during his life, after his death the revelation that he was not Indigenous negatively affected his reputation.

**Gunpowder Plot**: unsuccessful November 5, 1605 plan by Catholic terrorist Guy Fawkes to blow up British Parliament with 36 kegs of gunpowder hidden in the cellar.

**H**

**George Handel:** a successful composer of Baroque music, specializing in operas and organ concertos, such as *Messiah.*

**Henry VIII**: a British monarch who split from the Roman Catholic church in order to get an annulment of his marriage, leading to the eventual formation of the Anglican church/Church of England

**Thomas Hobbes**: 18th century British philosopher whose work focussed on social contracts and political theory. Wrote *Leviathan* and said human life is “nasty, brutish and short.”

**Hudson Bay Company**: a trading enterprise primarily concerned with the early fur trade in North America.

**David Hume**: 18th century Scottish philosopher who held that passion rather than reason governs human behaviour.

**Hutterite**: 18th century anabaptist religious community which formed isolationist communities in America

**I**

**Incan Empire**: the largest, most technologically advanced empire in pre-Columbian America. Centred around what is now Peru and included parts of what are now Bolivia, Ecuador, Chile and Argentina.

**Declaration of Independence:** document which formed the United States of America as a country separate from England

**indulgences**: a controversial practice of the Catholic church involving charging money to supposedly purge members of sin

**Industrial Revolution:** period of time in which Europe moved aggressively from rural farming communities to urban factories

**J**

**James II**: The last Roman Catholic monarch of England, Scotland and Ireland

**Jamestown, Virginia**: the first permanent English settlement in the Americas. Didn’t go well at first. Cannibalism ensued.

**Janissaries:** began as an elite corps of slaves under the Ottoman Empire made up of kidnapped young Christian boys who were converted to Islam and became famed for internal cohesion cemented by strict discipline and order. Unlike typical slaves, they were paid regular salaries.

**Thomas Jefferson:** third president of the United States of America, after being the chief writers of the Declaration of Independence and other legal documents.

**K**

**John Knox:** founder of the Presbyterian church in Scotland during the Protestant Reformation

**Immanuel Kant**: 18th century German philosopher who argued that space, time and causation exist, but their nature is unknowable. In his view, the mind shapes and structures experience rather than perceiving them passively.

**L**

**Robert E. Lee:** confederate general who lost control over the south to northern unionist forces in the American Civil War

**Vladimir Ilyich Lenin: once Tsarist Russia was overthrown, this Russian became the leader who stepped into the chaos and formed the Soviet Union as a communist state including Russia and a great deal of surrounding geography.**

**Battle of Lexington:** first military engagement after the Boston Tea Party and Paul Revere’s ride. Shots were briefly fired between British soldiers and 80 local militia men, but no one was hit.

**Abraham Lincoln:** American president during the American Civil War, responsible for the Emancipation Proclamation which ended slavery.

**John Locke:** 18th century British philosopher who postulated that, at birth, the mind was a blank slate or *tabula rasa*. Father of liberalism. Interested in identity and the self and how they are formed. Not a big believer in genetics and evolution playing a large role in forming those.

**Louis XIV: French king viewed as the most successful monarch in the history of France, was known as the Sun King, and had an extravagant lifestyle and court.**

**Louis XVI:** French monarch who was so helpful providing ships for the American Revolution, that one of the United States was named after him. Had his head cut off during the French Revolution.

**Lower Canada: early British name for the colonies in what is now called Quebec**

**Martin Luther**: a former monk who famously crafted 95 objections to common practice in the 16th century Catholic church, such as simony and indulgences

**M**

**Nicolo Machiavelli**: Italian Renaissance writer famous for *The Prince*, a book about how to cunningly manipulate one’s way to positions of power and influence

**Jean-Paul Marat**: journalist and politician during the French Revolution. He fiercely advocated, in pamphlets, placards and newspapers, for basic human rights for the poorest members of society. He called for prisoners of the Revolution to be killed quickly before they could be freed. Assassinated with a kitchen knife by Charlotte Corday while taking a medicinal bath for his debilitating skin condition.

**Mason-Dixon Line:** surveying line drawn on the map of the United States of America by Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon, dividing it into groups of Northern and Southern states.

**Jules Raymond Mazarin: French Cardinal under Louis XIII and XIV who was granted a dukedom, arranged Louis XIV’s tactical marriage to a Spanish princess who was his cousin, and who does not feature in *The Three Musketeers.***

**Mennonites**: 18th century anabaptist religious community which formed isolationist communities in America and Canada. Some factions are anti-technology.

**Mexico City**: capital city of Hernán Cortés’ colony in North America, built on the site of the conquered Aztec city of Tenochtitlan

**middle class:** merchant class which developed between the aristocracy and poor. No titles, but possible land and business ownership, and therefore a strong claim to citizenship rights.

**John Milton:** renaissance British poet who wrote *Paradise Lost*, a dramatic retelling of the interference of the fallen angel Lucifer in the dealings of God and man.

**Ming dynasty:** Chinese dynasty eventually overthrown by less European-friendly one.

**Louis Joseph, Marquis de Montcalm**: French general who was not victorious at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham before dying.

**Montezuma**: ruler of the Aztec Empire who tried to stop Hernán Cortés escaping, and was killed.

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Austrian classical composer famous for intricate, difficult to play pieces, composing over 600 works, starting at age seven.**

**Muscovy:** the predecessor state of the Tsardom of Russia, centred around Moscow.

**N**

**Napoleonic Wars: a series of Post-revolutionary wars in which the French Empire, under Emperor Napoleon the 1st, tried to conquer all of Europe, and Europe tried to organize into coalitions to resist him.**

**New Amsterdam: early Dutch settlement on the East coast of North America**

**New England**: area of East coast America which was first settled by the British.

**Isaac Newton**: English mathematician, physicist, astronomer, theologian, and author widely recognised as one of the most influential scientists of all time, and a key figure in the scientific revolution. Co-created Calculus.

**Nova Scotia:** the first permanent European settlement in what would one day be Canada is now this province.

**O**

**Ottoman Empire: a long-lived Islamic empire which for a time blocked European access to trade with Asia.**

**Ortona:** the part of Italy where the Germans made a last attempt to fight off Allied Forces during WWII. The “Vandoos” (22nd French-Canadian regiment) did very well here.

**P**

**Johann Pachelbel**: a successful composer of Baroque music, known for his *Canon in D*.

**Thomas Paine:** an important bookseller and publisher in 18th-century London. Published “Common Sense,” a pamphlet arguing for independence from Europe for British colonies in North America.

**Treaty of Paris:** document signed in France by representatives of King George III of Great Britain and America. Ended the American Revolutionary War. Set the boundaries between the British Empire in North America and the United States.

**Peter the Great:** a Tsar who greatly expanded the size of Russia through successful wars, and also purposely worked to modernize Russia.

**Francisco Pizarro:** Spanish conquistador whose expedition to South America ended the Incan empire.

**Battle of the Plains of Abraham:** conflict outside Quebec City between British and French forces for control of what would be Canada

**Plymouth Rock**: big rock on the American east coast traditionally believed to be the site of disembarkation of the *Mayflower* pilgrims who founded a colony there in 1620

**Primidi**: the first day of the metric ten-day week during the French Revolution

**Protestant Reformation: a movement resulting in the splitting of the Roman Catholic church into Catholic and Protestant factions.**

**Q**

**Province of Quebec: name for region of North America formerly known as Lower Canada**  
**Qing dynasty: also known as the Manchu dynasty, this dynasty overthrew the comparatively European-friendly Ming dynasty**

**Quakers**: religious organization which fled persecution in Europe and established lasting communities in America.

**Quebec Act**: 18th century act, previously called the British North America Act, which was British parliament decreeing how Quebec would be run.

**Quebec City:** one of the oldest European settlements in North America and the only fortified city north of Mexico whose walls still exist. N**amed from** an Algonquin word meaning "where the river narrows"

**R**

**Red River Rebellion: conflict between mostly francophone and indigenous people in what is now Manitoba, and anglophone protestant governance from Ottawa. Led by Louis Riel.**

**Reign of Terror**: tyrannical period of atheistic “rationalism” following the overthrow of the monarchy and previous power structures in the French Revolution. If cancel culture decided your thinking was wrong, they cut your head off.

**Rembrandt**: 17th century Dutch painter famous for portraits and biblical scenes.

**Renaissance: a time of cultural, philosophical and artistic “rebirth” centering around Florence, Italy, around the 16th century.**

**Cardinal Richelieu: French Cardinal under Louis XIII who was very influential in French foreign policy, including the Thirty Years War, and French power in Quebec. Depicted as an evil figure in *The Three Musketeers.***

**Louis Riel: Metis founder of Manitoba, politician and rebellion leader. Vocal proponent of francophone and indigenous rights. Hanged for trying to overthrow the government of first Canadian prime minister John A. Macdonald.**

[**Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Declaration_of_the_Rights_of_Man_and_of_the_Citizen): document which established human rights under the newly king-less France. The right to not have one’s head cut off was not mentioned.

**Maximilien Robespierre: controversial figure in the French Revolution who either orchestrated the tyranny of the Terror, or was merely the person behind the thinking which caused it. Guillotined on the 9th of Thermidor.**

**Romanov dynasty**: the last dynasty of Tsars to rule Russia. Exterminated in the Russian Revolution.

**Jean-Jacques Rousseau**: 18th century Genevan philosopher much quoted during the French revolution. Interested in inequality and the politics of power.

**Peter Paul Rubens**: the most influential artist of Flemish Baroque tradition, specializing in full-figured nudes

**Russian Revolution: the overthrow of the Romanov dynasty and the ending of Tsarist Russia, soon leading to the communist Soviet Union.**

**S**

**Scientific Revolution: European movement at the end of the Renaissance** when developments in mathematics, physics, astronomy, biology and chemistry transformed society.

**Second World War: 20th century war involving most of the world fighting to stop a coalition of Nazi Germany, fascist Italy and imperial Japan from taking over most of the world.**

**Sengoku Jidai: the Japanese Empire’s feudal system that was re-established in the 17th century after being partly dismantled.**

**The Seven Years War:** also known as the French and Indian War, it pitted the colonies of British America against those of New France, each side supported by military units from the parent country and by Indigenous allies.

**William Shakespeare:** Elizabethan poet and playwright famous for works such as *Hamlet, Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet*

**simony**: a practice of the Catholic Church involving accepting money to help members gain positions of power and status in it.

**Sitting Bull: 19th century** Hunkpapa Lakota holy man and leader of indigenous resistance to European settlement of the American west.

**Spanish Civil War: civil war falling between the two World Wars involving Spain being divided between fascists and democratic forces, with fascism winning out and holding power until 1975. Many non-Spanish people tried to serve as volunteers in it to preserve democracy.**

**St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre: a large-scale slaughter of Protestants by Catholics**

**St. Francis Xavier:** Portuguese priest who first helped convert Japanese people to Christianity and open up trade between Portugal and Japan.

**Adam Smith**: 18th century British philosopher and economist responsible for the idea of the “invisible hand” self-regulating economies.

**Soviet Union: after the fall of Tsarist Russia, this union of neighboring countries with Russia to form a global superpower was formed under the hand of Vladimir Illyich Lenin.**

**Storming of the Bastille**: the action which started the French Revolution.

**Joseph Stalin: Soviet dictator responsible for the deaths of tens of millions of his own people, in power during the Second World War**

**steam engine:** early source of power for machines in factories of the Industrial Revolution

**T**

**Taxation without representation**: central grievance of British colonists in North America who wanted independence from Britain

**Council of Trent: a post-Reformation meeting of Catholic officials to deal with the fact that the Catholic church had split, and decisions needed to made about how to proceed afterward.**

**The Thirty Years’ War:** a 17th century European war between various Protestant and Catholic states in the fragmented Holy Roman Empire, that gradually developed into a more general conflict. Most deaths were due to starvation, disease and non-military social unrest.

**Thermidor**: a summer month under the French Republican calendar during the French Revolution

**Trail of Tears:** a series of forced relocations in the 19th century of Native Americans in the United States from their ancestral homelands in the Southeastern United States, being marched to areas to the west that had been designated “Indian Territory.”

**Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade**: one of the most inhumane human trafficking operations in history, involving African slaves being shipped to the Americas to be sold and work as human livestock.

**TULIP**: an acronym used to teach John Calvin’s understanding of man’s problematic state before God

**Jethro Tull:** English agricultural pioneer from Berkshire who helped bring about the British Agricultural Revolution by inventing a horse-drawn seed drill.

**William Tyndale**: a key figure in the Protestant Reformation who opposed, however, Henry VIII’s marriage of Anne Boleyn, and was executed. Famous for creating an early translation of the bible into English that was mass-produced on the Guttenberg printing press.

**U**

**U-Boat:** term used to describe submarines in the First World War. From the German term “das unterseeboot“

**Upper Canada: the early name for British colonies in what is now Ontario**

**V**

**Valcartier:** the huge training camp where Canadian soldiers were trained before being sent to Europe to fight in the First World War**.**

**Vikings:** word for Scandinavian raiding parties which often attacked European settlements from the north after the Middle Ages. Not a country or political or ethnic group.

**Vimy Ridge:** a ridge in France that the Canadians got back from the Germans during WWI despite almost impossible odds, by using a “rolling barrage” tactic.

**Voltaire**: 18th century French philosopher much quoted during the French revolution. famous for his wit, his criticism of Christianity, especially the Roman Catholic Church, and his advocacy of freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and separation of church and state.

**W**

**Albert Wallenstein:** the supreme commander of the armies of the Habsburg Emperor Ferdinand II and a major figure of the Thirty Years' War. An innovator in using taxation to fund successful wars.

**George Washington**: British colonist general and first president of the brand new United States of America

**James Watt:** Scottish engineer who developed a practical steam engine which made the factories of the Industrial Revolution possible.

**Weimar Republic: German government after the abdication of Emperor Wilhelm II during WWI, then supplanted by the Nazi regime.**

**Wellington**: British general who beat Napoleon at the battle of Waterloo, ending Napoleon’s bid to conquer Britain.

**William of Orange**: Protestant nephew and son-in-law of James II of England, whom William overthrew in The Glorious Revolution.

**James Wolfe**: British general who was victorious at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham before dying.

**Mary Wollstonecraft**: 18th century British feminist whose daughter Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein.*

**Diet of Worms: a regular meeting of representatives of the Holy Roman Empire to discuss important matters, most notably what to do about Martin Luther.**