

How to Use This List

This is intended as a study guide for high school Social Studies classes and is by no means a complete list of terms for a secondary social studies department. Instead it is a combination of the most common vocabulary terms used on the ACT-SAT that would be covered in a social studies classroom. As a teacher, I would introduce the entire list to students at the beginning of the year or semester and then quiz them on the words' meanings and relationships weekly. Students who created study sheets that were not simply the definitions rewritten, i.e. comic strips or metaphorical drawings, tended to retain and cross connect words better. Our state ACT schedule dates are usually in March, so I would quizz during the second semester even if we had not talked about or discussed the words as part of a unit. Each quiz was formatted with 15 questions in a word bank of all words, then an additional question to write or draw as a means to show understanding for words not quizzed. I hope you find this resource helpful.

Definitions created and/or modified from the following:

Lexico Dictionaries | English, Lexico Dictionaries, www.lexico.com/en/definition/enfranchisement. Accessed 7 Mar. 2020.

Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary>. Accessed 7 Mar. 2020.

GROUP ONE

arbitrary- adj. subject to individual will or judgment without restriction; contingent solely upon one's discretion; capricious; unreasonable; unsupported

armistice- n. a temporary suspension of hostilities by agreement of the warring parties; an impermanent truce

bourgeoisie- n. the upper class; people, in contrast to the wage-earning class, is primarily concerned with property values. (ant. proletariat)

blitzkrieg- n. a swift intensive military attack, esp using tanks supported by aircraft, designed to defeat the opposition quickly

compulsory- adj. required; mandatory; obligatory

destitute- adj. without means of subsistence; lacking food, clothing, and shelter.

deviate- v. to turn aside, as from a route, way, course; to depart or swerve, as from a procedure, course of action, or acceptable norm.

disseminate- v. to scatter or spread widely, as though sowing seed; promulgate extensively; broadcast; disperse

dissident- n. a person who dissents, objects, or overtly challenges leadership.

dogmatic- adj. asserting opinions in a doctrinaire or arrogant manner; opinionated; arbitrary; imperious; dictatorial.

emissary- n. a representative sent on a mission or errand.

emulate- v. to try to equal or excel; imitate with effort to equal or surpass.

gambit- n. any maneuver by which one seeks to gain an advantage by making a sacrifice.

heretic- n. a dissenter from the established religious beliefs

impervious- adj. not permitting penetration or passage; impenetrable

incognito- adj. adv. n. having one's identity concealed, as under an assumed name, especially to avoid notice or formal attention.

indigenous- adj. originating in and characteristic of a particular region or country; native

judicious- adj. using or showing judgment as to action or practical expediency; discreet, prudent, or politic.

proletariat- n. the working class; wage earning people with almost no property ownership (ant. bourgeoisie)

quarantine- n. the short term detention (based on a 40 day period) of a person or animal for the purpose of medical or disciplinary isolation

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GROUP TWO

conclave- n. a grouping of leaders selected to make a decision, modern use in reference to the election of a new pope.

devious- adj. departing from the most direct way; circuitous; indirect. erudite adj. characterized by great knowledge; learned or scholarly.

fortnight-n. a time period of two weeks or 14 days.

obliterate- v. to remove or destroy all traces of; do away with; destroy completely.

obscure- adj. (of meaning) not clear or plain; ambiguous, vague, or uncertain.

pertinent- adj. pertaining or relating directly and significantly to the matter at hand; relevant.

pollinate- v. to transfer pollen from one flower to another.

provocative- adj. tending or serving to provoke; inciting, stimulating, irritating, or vexing.

querulous- adj. one who tends to complain

quixotic- adj. extravagantly chivalrous or romantic; visionary, impractical, or impracticable; impulsive and often rashly unpredictable.

redundant- adj. being a copy of another thus leading to unimportant status.

regressive- adj. tending to move in the opposite of progression: to decrease the amount of collected taxes as the amount of monies increases.

reparation- n. payments for damages made, usually in reference to war or a violent act.

shrewd- adj. astute or sharp in practical matters.

squander- v. to spend or use (money, time, etc.) extravagantly or wastefully (often followed by away).

subterranean- adj. existing, situated, or operating below the surface of the earth; underground.

supplication- v. an act or instance of supplicating; humble prayer, entreaty, or petition.

theoretical- adj. given to, forming, or dealing with theories; hypothetical; speculative.

ubiquitous- adj. present, appearing, or found everywhere.

zeitgeist- n. the spirit of the age; something that is most popular at the current moment or period of time.

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GROUP THREE

abolition- n. the action or an act of ending a system, practice, or institution.

amnesty- v. grant an official pardon to.

annexation- n. the action of annexing something, especially territory.

appeasement- n. the action or process of gratifying or acquiescence.

attrition- n. the action or process of gradually reducing the strength or effectiveness of someone or something through sustained attack or pressure.

brinkmanship- n. the art or practice of pursuing a dangerous policy to the limits of safety before stopping, especially in politics

circumnavigate- v. sail or travel all the way around (something, especially the world).

concurrent (powers)- adj. existing, happening, or done at the same time. (powers shared by different parts/levels/branches of government.)

enumerated (powers)- adj. mention (a number of things) one by one.

conscription- n. compulsory enlistment for state service, typically into the armed forces.

impressment- n. the act of seizing for public use or of [impressing](#) into public service

eugenics- n. the practice or advocacy of controlled selective breeding of human populations (as by sterilization) to improve the population's genetic composition

covert- adj. not openly acknowledged or displayed.

de facto- adj. something that happens without a rule. (that's my seat because i always sit there.)

de jure- adj. something that happens because a rule exists. (this is my seat because we have a seating chart.)

detente- n the calming of violence or strained relations, especially between countries.

due process- n. fair treatment through the normal judicial system, especially as a citizen's entitlement.

graft- n. practices, especially bribery, used to secure illicit gains in politics or business; corruption.

insubordination- adj. defiant of authority; disobedient to orders.

insurrection- n. a violent uprising against an authority or government.

caucus- n. (in some us states) a meeting at which local members of a political party register their preference among candidates running for office or select delegates to attend a convention.

primary- n. (in the us) a preliminary election to appoint delegates to a party conference or to select the candidates for a principal, especially presidential, election.

disenfranchisement- n. being deprived of a right or privilege, especially the right to vote.

enfranchisement- n. the giving of a right or privilege, especially the right to vote.

constituent- n. being a voting member of a community or organization and having the power to appoint or elect.

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GROUP FOUR

arbitration- n. the use of another person to settle a dispute/argument/disagreement.

economies of scale- n. a saving in costs gained by an increased level of production.

capitalists- n. a wealthy person who uses money to invest in trade and industry for profit

entrepreneurs- n. a person who organizes and operates a business or businesses, taking on greater than normal financial risks

communism- n. a political theory derived from karl marx, advocating class war and leading to a society in which all property is publicly owned and each person works and is paid according to their abilities and needs.

socialism- n. theory of social organization which advocates that the means of production, distribution, and exchange should be owned or regulated by the community as a whole.

cooperative- n. a farm, business, or other organization which is owned and run jointly by its members, who share the profits or benefits.

fascism- n. a political philosophy, movement, or regime (such as that of the fascisti) that exalts nation and often race above the individual and that stands for a centralized autocratic government headed by a dictatorial leader

commune- n. a group of who share their resources and can be the beginning of a national communist movement.

contraband- n. any item that is illegal to own and have been smuggled within a place

embargo- n. an official ban on trade or other commercial activity with a particular country.

tariffs- n. taxes on any items being imported into a country or region.

espionage- n. act of spying on others for the benefit of a country or organization.

franchise- n. an authorization granted by a company to an individual or group enabling them to carry out specified commercial activities.

impound- v. seize and take legal custody of (something, especially a vehicle, goods, or documents) because of an infringement of a law or regulation. (my car was impounded after i was caught street racing.)

monopoly- n. the exclusive possession or control of the supply of or trade in a commodity or service.

juggernaut- n. any large, overpowering, destructive force or object.

junta- n. a small group, usually military in nature, ruling a country, especially immediately after a coup d'état and before a legally constituted government has been instituted.

mitigate- v. to lessen in force or intensity, as wrath, grief, harshness, or pain; moderate; to make less severe:

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