

Key Era Vocabulary

This report provides a summary of key vocabulary for this era. For each word, you will find the definition, part of speech, word forms (plurals/tenses), synonyms, and examples of how the word, or forms of the word, are used in a sentence.

alliance

- a formal pact or agreement between or among nations

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	alliances
Synonyms:	agreement, compact, pact, treaty
In a sentence:	The two nations formed an alliance in hopes of defeating their common enemy in war.

antisemitism

- prejudice, discrimination, or hostility toward Jews

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	antisemite, antisemitic
Synonyms:	prejudice, discrimination, hate
In a sentence:	The genocide of the Holocaust was largely motivated by the Nazi's antisemitism.

authoritarianism

- a system of ruling that advocates for complete obedience or subjection to authority, especially political authority, without concern for individual rights

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	authoritarian
Synonyms:	totalitarianism
In a sentence:	Without access to non-governmental newspapers, the citizens living under authoritarianism could not learn much about international affairs.

biodiversity

- the diversity of life forms on Earth or part of the Earth, including diversity of species, genes, and ecosystems, especially when regarded as providing the optimal conditions for evolution

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	
Synonyms:	biological diversity
In a sentence:	Climate change threatens the current biodiversity that exists on our planet.

Bolshevik

- a member of the majority faction of the Russian political party that seized power in 1917 and formed the Communist party in the Soviet Union

Part of speech:	proper noun, noun
Word forms:	Bolsheviks, Bolshevik, bolshevism
Synonyms:	communist
In a sentence:	The Bolsheviks wanted to revolt against the Russian government instead of waiting for reform to happen over time.

boycott

- to refuse to buy, use, attend, or deal with (a product, activity, business, or government), usually as a protest or means of persuasion

Part of speech:	verb
Word forms:	boycotted, boycotts
Synonyms:	reject, blacklist
In a sentence:	Ghanaian veterans boycotted British goods in order to put pressure on the colonial government.

civil disobedience

- the intentional, nonviolent refusal to comply with a government law or requirement, in order to try to influence the government to change some law, policy, or the like

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	
Synonyms:	
In a sentence:	Acts of civil disobedience are seen as a way to push policymakers to listen to the issues of citizens.

civilian

- a person who is not serving in the military or the police

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	civilians
Synonyms:	citizen, laic
In a sentence:	In addition to military personnel, many civilians were killed during the bombings.

climate change

- a change in global and regional climate patterns attributed to an increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	
Synonyms:	global warming
In a sentence:	While climate change terrifies most scientists, there are still some who refuse to believe that these changes are taking place.

communism

- the theory of a classless social system in which all property and means of production are owned in common; socialist theory deriving from the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels and adopted by the Soviet Union

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	communist
Synonyms:	
In a sentence:	China adopted communism as their political and economic system in 1949.

concentration camp

- a prison camp in which large numbers of political prisoners, aliens, or those considered undesirable are confined and sometimes executed

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	concentration camps
Synonyms:	
In a sentence:	During the 1940s, Japanese-Americans on the West coast were forced into concentration camps by the US military.

consumerism

- the idea that the consumption of goods is beneficial to society or its economy

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	consumer
Synonyms:	
In a sentence:	In the US, consumerism has contributed largely to the overfilling of landfills and the pollution of oceans.

containment

- a government policy, enacted in a variety of ways, that is intended to curb the territorial growth, economic expansion, or ideological influence of a hostile nation, in particular communist nations

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	contain, container
Synonyms:	control, constraint
In a sentence:	Under the policy of containment, the US tried to extend its sphere of influence in order to curb the spread of communism.

decolonization

- the process or act of freeing a colony or eliminating colonialism

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	decolonize
Synonyms:	freedom, overthrowing
In a sentence:	The decolonization process left many previous colonies in shambles due to economic dependence and arbitrary borders made by colonizers.

dependency

- the condition of relying on another for help or support

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	dependence
Synonyms:	reliance, dependence
In a sentence:	The baby birds' dependency on their parents for food required them to stay in the nest at all times.

economic liberalization

- the state or act of decreasing government control of the economy in order to increase the role of private entities in the market

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	
Synonyms:	
In a sentence:	The economic liberalization of China has been kept in check partially by its communist government.

environment

- the sum of everything that surrounds animals and humans in the natural world, including the air, the water, and the soil

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	environments, environmental
Synonyms:	surroundings, setting, habitat
In a sentence:	Air pollution from cars is one of the causes of harm to the environment.

ethnic

- of or related to a large group of people who share a distinctive culture, language, or religion, or who are of the same race or national heritage

Part of speech:	adjective
Word forms:	ethnicity, ethnically
Synonyms:	racial, tribal, national, indigenous
In a sentence:	Japanese and Chinese immigrants made up two of Hawaii's major ethnic groups in 1900.

eugenics

- the study of or belief in the genetic improvement of the human race through control of breeding

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	
Synonyms:	selective breeding
In a sentence:	Eugenics is a dangerous philosophy because it leads to discrimination and cruelty, like the Holocaust.

fascism

- a system of government characterized by strong, often dictatorial control of political and economic affairs, and often by warlike nationalism and brutal suppression of political dissidents and ethnic minorities

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	fascist
Synonyms:	tyranny
In a sentence:	The Nazi's wanted to spread fascism and rule the world.

genocide

- the intentional attempt to exterminate all members of a certain race, religion, nationality, or ethnic group

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	genocides, genocidal
Synonyms:	holocaust, massacre
In a sentence:	Within the borders of Rwanda, there was a mass genocide against a minority group.

globalization

- the process or idea of the world becoming more like that of a single nation with one shared economy and culture rather than separate, distinct countries

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	globalize, global
Synonyms:	development, interconnection
In a sentence:	The globalization of our systems of trade have led to most of the goods found in the US being produced in China.

gross domestic product (GDP)

- the total market value of the goods and services produced by a country's economy during a specified period of time

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	
Synonyms:	
In a sentence:	A country's gross domestic product (GDP) is a good indicator for the strength of its economy.

guerilla

- one of an unofficial or loosely organized group of soldiers who stage unconventional or surprise attacks against an enemy

Part of speech:	noun, adjective
Word forms:	guerrillas
Synonyms:	
In a sentence:	The guerrillas were camped out in the forest, preparing for their next attack on government leaders.

the Holocaust

- the systematic slaughter of Jews and members of other groups by Nazis during World War II

Part of speech:	proper noun
Word forms:	
Synonyms:	genocide, annihilation
In a sentence:	The Holocaust is remembered as one of history's most atrocious crimes against humanity.

humanitarian

- characterized by concern for improving the welfare of humanity

Part of speech:	adjective
Word forms:	humanitarianism
Synonyms:	altruistic, humane
In a sentence:	The company was motivated more by the desire for profits than by humanitarian concerns.

inequality

- the condition of being unequal, especially in natural talents or social or economic status

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	inequalities
Synonyms:	injustice, unfairness, disparity
In a sentence:	One of the many inequalities experienced by the lower class is lack of access to resources.

mobilization

- the act of assembling, organizing, or adapting (industries, supplies, facilities, or the like) for immediate use or service in times of war or states of emergency; the act of assembling and preparing (troops or the like) for active military duty or service to a country

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	mobilize, mobilized
Synonyms:	assembling, preparing
In a sentence:	The nation ordered the mobilization of the military to prepare for the upcoming battle.

national sovereignty

- the right or power of a nation-state to govern itself, with independence from outside control

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	
Synonyms:	sovereignty, independence
In a sentence:	National sovereignty was a key component of decolonization during the twentieth century as colonies sought freedom from imperialist countries.

nationalize

- to bring under government ownership or control

Part of speech:	verb
Word forms:	nationalizes, nationalized, nationalizing, nationalization
Synonyms:	communalize
In a sentence:	The administration intends to nationalize the banks in order to control the supply of money.

Nazi

- a member of the National Socialist German Workers' Party which controlled Germany under Hitler from 1933 to 1945; fascist

Part of speech:	proper noun, noun
Word forms:	Nazis
Synonyms:	fascist
In a sentence:	Under Hitler's leadership the Nazis took control of the German government and rebuilt the military in violation of the Treaty of Versailles.

non-governmental organization (NGO)

- any non-profit organization or body that operates independently of government

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	non-governmental organizations, NGOs
Synonyms:	non-profit
In a sentence:	The non-governmental organization your cousin works for raises money to lobby for prison reform.

nonviolence

- the policy or practice of refusing to use violent means to pursue political or social aims

Part of speech:	adjective
Word forms:	nonviolent, nonviolently
Synonyms:	peaceful
In a sentence:	One of Gandhi's main principles was nonviolence.

nuclear

- of or having atomic or hydrogen bombs

Part of speech:	adjective
Word forms:	nucleus
Synonyms:	atomic
In a sentence:	The threat of nuclear war terrified people across the world during the 1960s.

pacifism

- refusal to use or acknowledge violence as a means for settling disputes

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	pacifist
Synonyms:	
In a sentence:	The gang members had no regard for pacifism, as they settled all conflicts with violence.

partisan

- a person who is strongly or actively devoted to some cause, idea, group, or person

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	partisans
Synonyms:	supporter, ally
In a sentence:	Partisan politics in the United States is generally characterized by the two main political parties—Democratic and Republican.

partition

- the political division of a nation into two or more separate nations

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	partitions
Synonyms:	division, separation
In a sentence:	The partition of Germany during the Cold War was physically represented by the Berlin Wall, which was constructed in 1961.

per capita

- for each unit of population or person

Part of speech:	adjective
Word forms:	
Synonyms:	per person
In a sentence:	The high school was built to accommodate one locker per capita.

privatize

- to change from governmental control or ownership to private

Part of speech:	verb
Word forms:	privatizes, privatizing, privatized
Synonyms:	
In a sentence:	The railways in that country are now being privatized.

proliferation

- the act or process of spreading quickly

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	proliferations
Synonyms:	multiplication
In a sentence:	The leaders signed a treaty to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

propaganda

- information or opinions that are made public to promote or attack a movement, cause, or person

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	
Synonyms:	advertisement
In a sentence:	Anti-abortion groups distributed propaganda in hopes of swaying voters to join their cause.

regulation

- a principle, rule, or law designed to regulate behavior and conduct

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	regulations
Synonyms:	law, rule
In a sentence:	Fire department regulations require public buildings to be equipped with sprinklers.

security

- freedom from danger

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	securities, secure
Synonyms:	safety, protection
In a sentence:	The security of the president depends on the skill of his bodyguards.

self-determination

- the freedom to make decisions for oneself without external pressure or influence

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	self-determined, self-determining
Synonyms:	independence, liberty
In a sentence:	With autonomy came self-determination for this small nation that had long been dominated by foreign powers.

Social Darwinism

- a late-nineteenth-century social theory in which Darwinism is applied to the understanding of human society, as in the belief of the genetic superiority of some individuals or groups over others

Part of speech:	proper noun
Word forms:	Social Darwinist
Synonyms:	
In a sentence:	She believed some people are born better than others, and was intrigued by the theory of Social Darwinism.

sphere of influence

- a country or region that another country has informal power over but no formal authority

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	spheres of influence
Synonyms:	territory, protectorate
In a sentence:	China spread its sphere of influence to include many Southeast Asian countries.

sterilization

- the act of rendering unable to reproduce, as by removing or damaging the reproductive organs

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	sterile, sterilize
Synonyms:	
In a sentence:	The involuntary sterilization of people of color was a cruel and oppressive act.

stock market

- a market where stocks and bonds are bought and sold

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	stock markets
Synonyms:	stock exchange
In a sentence:	Many historians point to the crash of the US stock market in 1929 as the beginning of the Great Depression.

subsistence

- the provision, source, or means of sustenance; that which supports life or continued operation

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	subsistent
Synonyms:	livelihood, living
In a sentence:	In the northeast colonies of America, most farming was for subsistence.

superpower

- a country with great international power and influence, especially one that dominates the affairs of other countries

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	superpowers
Synonyms:	
In a sentence:	The global superpowers during the Cold War included the US and the USSR.

tariff

- a government tax on imports or exports, or a rate or schedule of such taxes; duty

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	tariffs, tariffing, tariffed
Synonyms:	tax, duty
In a sentence:	The president is threatening to impose extreme tariffs if the country refuses to honor the peace treaty.

total war

- a global war in which all warring nations mobilize for the war effort including soldier and civilian populations, who are both participants and targets; usually defined as meeting four criteria: mobilization, blurring of lines between soldier and civilian, total control of society, and rejection of a compromise peace

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	
Synonyms:	
In a sentence:	Some historians argue that World War I was the first example of total war.

totalitarian

- designating a system of government in which power and authority are highly centralized and intrusive into the lives of private citizens, and in which neither opposing parties nor individual differences in opinion are allowed

Part of speech:	adjective
Word forms:	totalitarianism
Synonyms:	authoritarian, dictatorial, tyrannical
In a sentence:	A totalitarian government was established under the dictator.

union

- an organization of laborers

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	unions, labor union
Synonyms:	labor union, trade union, guild
In a sentence:	The union organized to demand higher wages and safer working conditions for their members.

welfare

- public or private aid for people in need

Part of speech:	noun
Word forms:	
Synonyms:	assistance, aid, relief
In a sentence:	Many changes have been made to the nation's system of welfare since its inception.