

UNIT TWO

GLOSSARY

13th Amendment

this change to the U.S. Constitution, ratified after the Civil War in 1865, abolished slavery in the United States

abolition/abolitionist

the act of getting rid of something; a person taking action to eliminate slavery

auction

an event in which items are sold to the highest bidder

bondage

the state of being bound (tied up or chained), like a slave

captive

someone who has been captured

chattel slavery

a system of enslavement in which people are considered the property of their owners for life; chattel is personal property, such as livestock, furniture and other belongings

Confederate States of America

an unrecognized breakaway state, formed by the secession of 11 slave-holding states, that fought against the United States during the American Civil War to preserve slavery and white supremacy

dehumanize

to deprive a person of human qualities; to make others feel or appear less than human

emancipation

freeing someone from the control of another

Emancipation Proclamation

a statement and order made by President Abraham Lincoln on September 22, 1862, during the Civil War, setting enslaved people in the Confederacy free

enslaved person

we say "enslaved person" instead of "slave" to emphasize their humanity

enslaver

a person who forces another into slavery; we say "enslaver" instead of "master" or "owner" to show that slavery was forced upon human beings

fugitive

someone who runs away and avoids capture; "freedom seeker" is preferred to "fugitive" when talking about enslaved people who escaped

Fugitive Slave Act

name of laws passed in 1793 and 1850 making it a crime to shelter people escaping enslavement and making the government responsible for finding, returning and trying enslaved people who had escaped

Gradual Emancipation

name given to laws that phased out slavery slowly, for instance by saying that people born after a certain date would be free after a certain period of time

import/importation

to bring in from abroad; an 1807 law made it illegal to bring enslaved people from another country to the U.S.

insurgency

an organized rebellion or uprising against authority

Jim Crow

a racist character invented by a white actor in the 1830s; the name given to the system of laws that segregated Black Americans from the 1870s to the 1960s

La Amistad

a 19th-century Spanish ship known for a revolt in 1839 by the 53 enslaved Mende people aboard, who were kidnapped in current-day Sierra Leone and brought to Cuba

labor/laborer

tough physical work/worker

manumit/manumission

release from slavery/the act of setting free an enslaved person or people

Mende (or Mendi)

one of the two largest ethnic groups in Sierra Leone; many of the captives aboard the ship, the Amistad, were Mende

mutiny

a rebellion against authority

overseer

someone who watches over and directs the work of others

plantation

a large property where crops are grown; before the Civil War, many southern plantations used enslaved labor to farm cotton, tobacco and other crops

Quaker

a member of the Religious Society of Friends; a Christian group opposed to slavery during the 17th-19th centuries

rebellion

the action of rising up and fighting against those in power

resistance

working against something you disagree with; cultural and spiritual resistance refers to preserving one's humanity through, for example, the arts, religion, or family and community traditions

secede/secession

break away/separation; from 1860–61, 11 U.S. slave states seceded or withdrew from the Union, ultimately leading to the Civil War

servitude

the state of being a servant or slave and having to answer to a master

Slave Codes

a set of rules and laws governing slavery and enslaved people in the United States, based on the idea that enslaved persons were the property of enslavers

states' rights

the powers or decisions controlled by states versus the federal government, including managing elections, setting traffic laws and building roads and schools

stereotype

a generalization about a person or group without regard for individual differences; the false idea that all members of a group are the same and think and behave in the same way

transatlantic slave trade

the transport by slave traders (mostly European) of 10-12 million enslaved African people across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas between the 16th and 19th centuries

Underground Railroad

a network of people, secret routes and safe houses used to free enslaved people from the late 1700s to the mid-1800s

The Weeping Time

name given to the largest auction of enslaved people in U.S. history in 1857, in which 436 individuals in Georgia were sold, tearing apart families and causing tremendous sorrow

White Supremacy

racist belief systems built around the ideas that white people/culture are superior, white people should be dominant over other people, and white people should live separately in a whites-only society