

Word List

Some words in the Word List have multiple definitions. The definitions here relate to how the word is used in Preparing for the Oath.

Definitions are adapted from the Oxford ESL Dictionary (2004), Merriam Webster online dictionary (m-w.com), and Longman Dictionary of American English (4th Edition, 2008).

A B C D E F G H I J L M N O P R S T U W Z

A

Act: a law that is officially accepted by the government, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act

Activist/Activists: someone who works for social or political change

Adopt/Adopted: to accept an idea, plan, or way of doing something; adopted is the past tense form of adopt

Advise/Advises: to recommend or suggest; to offer your opinion to someone

Allied: countries that are in agreement

Ally/Allies: a country that joins another country to fight a war

Amendment/Amendments: a change or addition to the U.S. Constitution

Anthem: an official song of a group of people or nation

Arms: weapons, such as guns

Assemble/Assembly: to come together in one place; assembly is the noun form of assemble

B

Battle: a fight during a war

Battlegrounds: places where people fight during a war



The Civil War battleground of Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Bill/bills: a proposed plan for a law that the government reviews

Bombed: attacked a place with bombs; bombed is the past tense form of bomb

Breaks the law/breaks laws: to not follow the law. *When someone steals, they break the law.*

C

Cabinet: a group of government leaders who advise the president

Campaign: a plan to win an election

Candidate/Candidates: a person who works to be elected to a political position

Capitalism: an economic system where most things are privately owned

Capitalist: a person, group, or nation that believes in or practices capitalism

Captured: got control of something; captured is the past tense form of capture

Case: a question or an argument that is decided in the court system

Celebrate: to do something special because of a certain day or event

Census: a formal count of the population in a city, county, state, or country

Citizen/Citizens: a person who legally belongs to a country and has the rights and protection of that country

Civic Group: an organized group of people that does things to help the community

Civilian: anyone who is not a member of the military or police

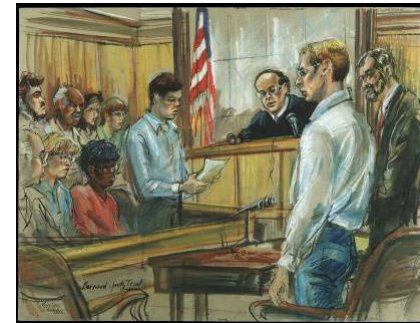
Colonists: people who lived in one of the original 13 British colonies before the United States became independent in 1776

Colonial: relating to a country or geographic area controlled by another country

Colony/Colonies: a country or geographic area controlled by another country

Commander in chief: the U.S. president's role as the official leader of the military

Commemorates: to remember someone or something by a special action, ceremony, or object



The courtroom is where the judge and jury listen to a case.

Communist/Communists/Communism: a political and economic system in which the government controls all the production of goods and owns most of the property

Constitutional: when something is allowed because it is in the U.S. Constitution. *The freedom to give your opinion is constitutional*

Courtroom: the place where legal cases are reviewed

Create/Creates/Created: to make something new; created is the past tense form of create

D

Debate/Debates: to discuss an issue in order to make a decision

Declare war: to formally announce that there will be a war

Defend: to protect someone or something from being attacked

Delegates: someone who speaks for another person or group of people, often at a meeting or as part of a political office

Demanded: to strongly request or order; demanded is the past tense form of demand

Democracy: a political system where the government is elected by the people

Diplomat: someone who officially represents his/her government in a foreign country

District/Districts: an official area of a state whose citizens elect a Representative to the House of Representatives

Diverse: groups of people or things that are different from each other

Doubled: to increase in size by two. *5 miles doubled is 10 miles; 2 miles doubled is 4 miles.*

Draft: Selective Service, a system that requires people to join the military

Duty: responsibility or obligation

E

Economic Opportunity: the chance to make more money, usually in business

Election/Elections: an event when people choose a member of government by voting

Enforce/Enforces: to make people follow laws

Enslaved: to force a person to become a slave; enslaved is the past tense form of enslave

Equal: to be the same

Equality: a situation where everyone has the same rights

Expand/Expanded: to grow or become larger; expanded is the past tense form of expand

Exploded: to blow up or make a loud noise; exploded is the past tense form of explode

F

Federal: part of the central U.S. government, not state or local governments

Federal Office: an elected position in the U.S. government

Fireworks: explosions that produce colorful lights in the sky

Forced: to make someone do something, even if they do not want to

Founded: started a town or institution

Freed: to be set free; to be allowed to live without control from others. *Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves.*



Fireworks on the fourth of July in Washington, DC

G

General: a person with a high rank in the Army, Air Force, or Marines

H

Honors/Honor: to publicly show that someone is respected

I

Illegal: not allowed by the law



General Dwight D. Eisenhower during World War II.

Independent/Independence: free; not controlled by another person or country

Inventor/Invented: someone who creates something for the first time; invented is the past tense form of invent; inventor is the noun form of invent

J

Jury/Juries: a group of people who listen to a case in court and decide if someone is guilty or innocent

Justice/Justices: 1. a judge in the U.S. Supreme Court; 2. fairness under the law

L

Legislatures: members of the branch of government that makes laws

Liberty: freedom

Loyal/Loyalty: demonstrating support for the same government or set of beliefs

M

Marches: organized walks by large groups of people to support an issue or to protest something

Mental Disabilities: conditions of the mind that make it difficult for someone to do things most people are able to do

Military: the armed forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard)

Minimum: smallest level or amount possible

N

National Defense: military protection of the country and its citizens

Nominates: to officially recommend a specific person to work in a political office

Nonviolent: with no use of violence

O

Obey: to do what the law says you must do

Opinion/Opinions: what someone thinks about an issue

Organize/Organized: to plan or arrange; organized is the past tense form of organize

Override: to change an official decision

P

Parades: public celebrations with bands and decorated vehicles moving down the street

Peaceful/Peacefully: with no violence

Petition: to formally ask the government to do something

Physical Disabilities: conditions of the body that make it difficult for someone to do things most people are able to do

Picnics: meals people eat in an outdoor area

Political Liberty: the right to participate in the government

Poll Taxes: money that some people had to pay to vote in an election

Postmaster General: the person in charge of the United States Postal Service

Powerful: having a lot of power or control

Press: newspapers, magazines, television, and Internet websites

Promise: to say you will definitely do something

Protect/protects/protected: to keep something or someone safe; protected is the past tense form of protect

Protest/Protests/Protested: to say or show that you disagree with something; protested is the past tense form of protest

Pursuit of Happiness: seeking a happy life



A parade on the 4th of July.

R

Racial Discrimination: treating someone unfairly because of their race or color of their skin

Register: to put a name or other information on an official list

Represent/Represents/Represented/Representation: to make decisions for another person or group of people; represented is the past tense form of represent

Representatives: elected members of a government group in the United States, such as in Congress

Requirements: something that must be done because of a law or rule

Responsibility/Responsibilities: a duty or task that you are required or expected to do

Right/Rights: something you are morally or legally allowed to do

Role: the responsibilities someone has as part of a job

Run for Office: to seek a political position, such as in Congress

S

Segregation: to make people live, work, and study separately because of their race, religion, or ethnicity

Self-Government: a government where the people make the laws

Separate/Separating/Separated: to keep something or someone apart; separated is the past tense form of separate

Serve/Served: to work for a certain period of time, usually in political office or in the military; served is the past tense form of serve. *She served as a congresswoman for two years.*

Settler/Settlers: a person or group of people who move to a new country or region where few people have been before

Signs/Signed/Signature: to write your name on a document to show that you approve; signed is the past tense form of sign; signature is the noun form of sign

Slaves/Slavery: people that are owned by other people and are forced to work without pay

Social Security: a U.S. government program into which workers must pay money to provide benefits for certain retired workers and their families, certain disabled workers and their families, and certain family members of deceased workers

Speech/Speeches: an expression of ideas and opinions that is made by someone who is speaking in front of a group of people

Statue: an object that looks like a person or animal, and is made of stone, metal, or other material

Stock Market: a financial system where people buy and trade shares or parts of companies

Sworn in: when an individual publicly promises to be loyal to a country or an important job; sworn in is the past tense form of swear in

Symbol: something that is used to represent an idea or organization

T

Term/Terms: the period of time someone serves in a political office

Terrorism: the use of violence to achieve political goals

Terrorist/Terrorists: someone who uses violence to achieve political goals

Tie: to have the same number of votes on each side

Treated/Treatment: to behave towards someone in a particular way; treated is the past tense form of treat; treatment is the noun form of treat. *They treated the slaves badly.*

Treaties: formal written agreements between two or more countries

Trial: a process in court to decide if someone is innocent or guilty of a crime

Tribe/Tribes: a group of people who have the same beliefs, customs, or language

U

Unconstitutional: not allowed by the U.S. Constitution

Unfair/Unfairly: to not treat people equally



A statue of George Washington. This statue is at the National Museum of American History.

W

Wages: money earned for a job

Z

Zoning: laws that say that land can only be used for a certain purpose, like building houses