

## Your Smartass List of America 1840-95 Specialist Terms

Northers	freezing cold winds on the Plains
Manifest Destiny	America's obvious mission to occupy the Plains
Providence	God's will
Frontier	The border between 'civilisation' and the 'untamed' Plains
Civilised Tribes	The five tribes of the south-east (Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles) – so-called they had adopted Christianity, laws, literacy and slavery
<i>wašíču</i>	The Sioux word for white Americans; it means 'he who takes the fat'
<i>thiyospaye</i>	The Sioux word for camp circle – ie the community meeting
<i>Oceti Sakowin</i>	The Sioux term meaning 'Seven Council Fires' – ie the Sioux Nation
<i>Akicita</i>	The Sioux warrior societies such as the Kit-Fox and the Strong-Heart
Counting coup	When a warrior touching his enemy with a coup stick
Wakantanka	The Great Spirit
<i>wakampi</i>	Spirits who, if offended, might cause misfortune or death and needed appeasing
<i>Wicasa wakan</i>	A Sioux holy man, often wrongly called a 'medicine man', or VERY incorrectly a 'shaman'.
<i>parflèches</i>	Buffalo skin bags into which they packed their belongings
<i>Wetu – Bloketu – Ptanyetu - Waniyetu</i>	Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter – the key season was <i>Blaketu</i> , the season of the buffalo hunt
tipi	Indigenous tent
polygamy	Having more than one wife
exposure	When an older Indigenous person asked to be left behind to die
Caulk a wagon	Seal the joints in a wagon with tar, so it will float across a river
Ague	Malaria
Camp fever	Typhus – a bacterial fever spread by lice and fleas
Forty-niners	The gold prospectors who flooded into California in 1849
Vigilante	Groups of citizens who take the law into their own hands
Indenture	A legal document binding a child to serve an apprenticeship
genocide	The attempt to wipe out an ethnic group
Danites	A Mormon paramilitary group
Gentiles	Actually, people who are not Jews ... but used by the Mormon to label people who were not Mormons
scrip	When cash is scarce, local economies sometimes use paper bills, guaranteed by (eg) the employer
adobe	Mud/ clay
Sod house	A house made out of turves.
dugout	A house which is a cave of hollow dug out of a bank side.
theocracy	Rule by the religious leaders
Quorum	The minimum number of attendees needed to make a meeting valid
Crazy Quilt	A loop-hole in the law stated that, if a rancher owned any land in a valley, he had the right to graze his cattle over all of it
Cattle fever	A disease of cattle, transmitted by a tick, to which the cattle ranchers' longhorn cattle were immune, but which killed the homesteaders' domestic cows.
Renegade	Actually, any outlaw – but particularly applied to Indigenous warriors off the reservation
exodusters	Free former enslaved Black Americans who went west to claim a plot under the Homestead Act
lynching	Hanging without a trial, usually of Black Americans by vigilante groups/ KKK etc.
sectionalism	'Sectionalism' is putting your region before any other.
tariff	A customs duty, levied on an import, designed to raise its price so that home-made products can compete against it.
nullification	Preventing an law or an order taking place'; specifically, South Caroline refusing to collect the Tariff of Abominations (1828)

Dough faces	Presidents who came from the north, but did as the southern Democrats told them
segregation	Keeping apart; specifically, preventing Black Americans being able to mix with white Americans in the South.
intersectionality	Where a number of issues overlap (e.g. a plantation-owner beating an enslaved woman is an issue of slavery, but also of racism, and of gender).
36°30'	The line of latitude of the 1820 Missouri Compromise – no slavery north of 36°30'.
secession	Where one of the US states declares it is leaving the Union.
Anaconda Plan	The Union plan to 'strangle' the South economically, by blockading the Southern ports, and capturing the Mississippi Valley.
Impressment	The act of seizing people or goods for public/army service; specifically, the Confederate Law of 1863 to buy supplies at half price.
cartridge	A small wrap of gunpowder used in a muzzle-loading musket
Gilded Age	A period of American history, 1870s-90s, known for its economic growth, wealth, materialism and corruption.
greenbacks	The US's first national paper currency, created by the 1863 National Banking Act.
'the draft'	Conscription – calling up men to serve in the Army.
<i>habeas corpus</i>	A Latin phrase which means, literally: 'you have a body' – the law which protects you from arrest without being charged.
Copperhead	A poisonous snake – in the Civil War, someone who lived in the North but supported the Confederates.
Impeach	To put a leading politician on trial for some misconduct
Carpetbaggers	Northerners moving south in search of work (because they carried their possessions in a cheap bag made from carpet).
Scallawags	Southerners who supported the Union
Reconstruction	The period, 1865-77, when the federal government tried to rebuild Southern politics and society.
Redeemer Democrats	White Southern Democratic politicians who wanted to take back political control of the South from federal/military rule.
Miscegenation	Entering into a mixed race marriage.
sharecropping	Where a landowner lets a farm for a share of the crop.
Southern Belle	The Southern ideal of womanhood, emphasizing genteel motherhood, family honour, and subservience to her husband.
United Daughters of the Confederacy	A Southern women's organisation dedicated to promoting the 'Lost Cause' theory of the Civil War.
Jim Crow Laws	A suite of laws that enforced racial segregation and white political and social supremacy in the American South.
Free Blacks	Black Americans who lived in the South before the American Civil War, but who had obtained their freedom.
Cash crop	A crop (eg cotton) farmed to sell for profit, not to use for subsistence.
Contrabands	enslaved people who had run away from, or been abandoned by, their owners, and had sought refuge with the Union army.
USCTs	United States Colored Troops.
Dunningite	The school of historians that portrayed Reconstruction as a dreadful atrocity of brutality and corruption perpetrated upon the South by the North.
Vagrant	Beggar.