

Glossary

Characters in *Past/Present* may sometimes use vocabulary words or historic slang that your students may be unfamiliar with. A complete list of such expressions and their meanings can be accessed by players anytime just by clicking the Glossary in the Brain. Certain words and concepts are central to understanding Walter and Anna's story; these are designated as Key Words and are displayed in red at the top of the list.

Key Word	Definition
agitators	people who encourage others to protest or rebel
boarder	someone who rents a bed and takes meals in a private home, or boarding house, but who is not a family member
capitalist	someone who uses money to invest in businesses and make even more money; used to describe rich businesspeople
competition	other companies going after similar customers
compromise	when two parties each give up something in order to come to an agreement
dividend	A payment a company gives to its investors
efficient	the least wasteful way to go; that which doesn't waste time or money
foreman	someone who supervises other workers in a factory
inventory	products a business has to sell
investment	something that is bought with the hope that it will be worth more in the future
managers	the people in charge of planning and running a factory
negotiate	when two sides discuss their problems and try to come to an agreement
overseer	a boss on a factory floor
profitable	makes money
promotion	Getting ahead at work by advancing to a more important job
prospectus	A document that describes an investment
replacements	Workers brought in to replace strikers; also known as "scabs"
socialist	Someone who believes that workers should share in the ownership of companies and other property for the common good
Society	The wealthiest and best-known families of a town
strike	to stop working as a way of protesting working conditions
syndicate	A group of individuals or organizations with a common purpose, often involving large amounts of money
telegram	A short message sent via wires in the days before long-distance phone calls. When they were received they were printed out on small pieces of paper.
union	An organization created to protect workers and to push back against the power of an employer
wages	hourly or weekly pay for work done

Word	Definition
abandon	to leave; get rid of
Andrew Carnegie	Millionaire steel tycoon who paid for libraries all across the U.S in the early 20th century
asylum	A hospital for the mentally ill
auditor	someone who looks at financial records
Auf wiedersehn	German for ""goodbye"
balance due	the amount of money a buyer owes a seller after putting down a deposit on something
bankrupt	broke
bean-counters	Slang for someone who is overly concerned with how money is spent
Beaneaters	Boston's National League baseball team, to become the Braves in 1912
Bile	Anger or irritability
bluffing	pretending something is true in order to gain an advantage
bobbin	A reel or cylinder on which thread is wound
book passage	To order tickets or arrange travel
boon companion	good friend
boxcarloads	contents of freight train cars
brigands	robbers that ambush people
calamity	a disaster
cannoli	an Italian dessert: a rolled pastry shell filled with sweet ricotta cheese
Canucks	An insulting name for French Canadians
Capital!	Exclamation meaning "Excellent!"
cephalopod	An animal having tentacles attached to the head, such as an octopus or squid
civic duty	something a citizen should do for his or her town
cobblestone	a small, round stone used to pave roads
coddling	babying, treating too nicely
commitment	a firm agreement and promise
compensated	paid enough for work done
comrades	friends and fellow-workers; used by socialists to suggest brotherhood
concession	agreeing to a demand by the other side
confederates	friends and fellow-workers
confidence	trust
consignment	a store might take a product on consignment; if they don't sell it, it goes back to the manufacturer
contraption	a machine that seems strangely put together
counsel	advice

Word	Definition
counteroffer	a response to someone else's demand in a negotiation
credentials	evidence that a person is qualified to do something
cur	An insult meaning a mongrel or mangy dog
Custer	Gen. George Armstrong Custer, famous for the "Last Stand" of 1876 when his troops were wiped out by Indians in Montana
dandies	men devoted to style and fashion
dead wood	unnecessary things to be gotten rid of
decadent	someone who indulges and spends too much on luxuries
deviltry	wicked behavior
diabolical	evil
dignity	being worthy of respect
dio mio!	Italian exclamation meaning "My God"
diplomatic	someone involved in government relations with other countries, like an ambassador
Donnybrook	Irish expression meaning a brawl or intense fight
dyspeptic	to have indigestion and irritability
economize	to save money on little things
elixir	a potion used to cure a medical problem
endorse	to approve of a cause or a plan
enlightened	being rational, informed, and modern thinking
entrepreneur	Somebody who invests money in starting a company and who hopes to make a big profit
exquisite	extremely beautiful
financially	related to money
financier	someone who manages large amounts of money; a banker
Florence Nightingale	A legendary English nurse from the nineteenth century
forthright	direct
fricaseed	Meat made into a stew
furlong	1/8 of a mile; 220 yards
gala	A fancy party
gambit	a scheme or plan
glean	to get information from many sources
graciousness	having very good manners
grievances	complaints or protests
hapless	Unfortunate, unlucky
hash	Literally a meal made of chopped meat and vegetables; used to describe something that's a mess

Word	Definition
heirloom	something valuable that is passed down in a family from parent to child
idle	not working
ignoramus	an ignorant or stupid person
illiterate	someone who can't read
incompetence	lack of ability; doing it wrong
infernal	horrible
inflexible	unable to change or compromise
ingrate	an ungrateful person
inquiries	questions
insolent	rude or disrespectful
intelligence	knowledge, information
interest	The money a bank or moneylender charges you when they give you a loan
intervene	get involved, or insert yourself between people or two opposing sides
invaluable	very valuable
John D. Rockefeller	John D. Rockefeller was the richest man in America in the early 1900s. He was the founder of the Standard Oil Company.
Kinetoscope	An early machine to watch movies. Viewers would look through the top to see a short film.
kip	a bundle
kugel	A noodle pudding eaten in Jewish homes on the Sabbath or other holidays
laquered	something sleek and glossy
latrine	an army term for an outdoor bathroom without plumbing
lavish	expensive and fancy
legitimate	accurate; being what one says one is
livelihood	Someone's job, or how they earn a living
livery stable	A business where horses are kept. An important place in a town before there were many cars.
lucre	money
Mein Gott!	An exclamation in German meaning "My God!"
meshuggah	A Yiddish word meaning "crazy"
middling	average; just OK, nothing special
militia	a part-time military force under the control of each state, similar to the National Guard
Misericordia!	Italian expression meaning "Mercy!"
mission work	Helping the poor in their neighborhoods, originally done by religious groups
mortgage	The loan a bank gives you to buy a house
my dogs are barking!	Slang expression meaning "My feet are killing me!"

Word	Definition
naught	nothing
ne'er-do-well	a worthless, good for nothing person
non fa niente	Italian for "it doesn't matter"
non-negotiable	firm, cannot be changed
nudnik	A Yiddish word meaning a pestering, nagging, or irritating person
Odio questo paese!	Italian for "I hate this country!"
outhouse	An outdoor shed with a toilet. Before running water came to most houses, people had to use outhouses.
paltry	small amount
payment on the note	If a bank loans you money (the "note"), you have to pay part of the money back periodically
payout	a large payment of money
peculiar	strange or unusual
peddler	someone who sells food or products from a street cart
penitentiary	a prison or jail
perishing	dying or being ruined
pestilential	causing disease
photoplays	Another name for movies
pipsqueak	a small, insignificant person
position	Job; place in the company
precincts	surroundings
President Teddy	Theodore Roosevelt, who was president from 1901 to 1908
productivity	the amount of work that is done in a certain amount of time
prudent	Wise; smart about making decisions
pungent	a strong smell or taste
purloin	steal
Queen of the May	A figure in English and Irish folklore who appears at springtime festivals
quota	A required amount of something; a minimum that you need to produce
rash	reckless, thoughtless
reputation	the way other people view someone
riff-raff	Slang: the poor and non-powerful people in town
ruffians	thugs
saints' bones	An extremely hard Italian cookie
sarsaparilla	an old-fashioned drink flavored with smilax root, used as a health tonic
scalpel	a very sharp blade used by doctors that can cut very precisely

Word	Definition
scandalized	being shocked by something indecent or rude
scoundrels	dishonest people
sfogiatelle	A many-layered Italian pastry
shifty	someone who seems dishonest
skulking	lurking
slaughterhouse	a place where animals are killed for food
sleuthing	investigating like a detective would
smidgen	a little bit
soiree	French for "evening"; another way to say "party"
solidarity	Sticking together for a common purpose; workers being loyal to each other
sourballs	hard candies
spitfire	a female with a short temper who is not afraid to express herself
spud	potato
stature	someone's importance in the community
stoppage	when workers stop working
szarlotka	Polish apple cake
tannery	A place where animal hides are treated with chemicals and tanned in the sun to make leather
tea and crumpets	An English afternoon snack of hot tea and a griddle cake
terms	the details of an agreement
textile	fabric
tipsy	Slightly drunk
toughs	thugs
transpiring	happening or taking place
trice	quickly
upper crust	Slang: the rich and prominent people in town
upstanding	honest or respectable
uptick	increase
va bene	Italian for "all right"
Vanderbilts and Carnegies	Two of the wealthiest families in America at the time. The Vanderbilts controlled railroads and the Carnegies controlled the steel industry.
vouched	confirmed something was true
waif	A homeless or orphaned child
wretched	miserable; poor; unfortunate