

Using Bias-Free Language

When talking about race:

1. Use only the language that is necessary to the context (do I really need to refer to race?).
2. Avoid terms that evaluate (lower class, minority, etc.)
3. Use the appropriate degree of specificity (“People of Korean descent” rather than “Asians”).
4. Focus on people rather than on a method of categorization (“enslaved people” rather than “slaves”).

Do NOT Use	The Problem?	Use Instead
Afro-American	Outdated and should be avoided	African American Black (but not ‘Blacks’)
Negro	Outdated and should be avoided	*** These terms are not always interchangeable. Some prefer one over the other.
N*****	Extremely offensive – do not ever use, even when telling a story or using titles of places, etc.	<i>If</i> you have to refer to it – use “N-word”
Colored or Colored People	Derogatory term	People of color (not colored people)
		Asian – refers to people who are citizens of countries in Southeast Asia or the Indian subcontinent.
		Asian American – Americans with Asian descent.
Oriental	A term that is used to refer to cultural objects such as carpets – pejorative when used to refer to people.	Pacific Islander (<i>Fiji, Guam, Hawaii, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, the Philippines, Samoa,</i>

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		<i>Tahiti and Tonga</i>)
Indian	A person from India. A derogatory term when referring to Native Americans.	Native American Indigenous – descendants of native people of any region. *** Use tribe name if possible.
American Indian	Used by the U.S. Census Bureau but is generally not preferred.	
Spanish	Only used when talking about someone from Spain.	Hispanic – refers to people from Spanish-speaking countries. Latino, Latina, Latinx – person of Latin American descent who can be of any background or language.
Caucasian	This outdated term refers back to three limited subjective anthropological categories created in the 1700's.	White
Minority	This word is viewed pejoratively because it is equated with being less than, oppressed or deficient in comparison with the majority.	Underrepresented/Underserved Use of minority only when using a modifier (“racial minority” or ‘ethnic minority’)
Underprivileged	This word is generally viewed pejoratively.	Whenever possible, use more specific terms - “Economically marginalized”
Third World	Used during the Cold War to describe countries in African, Asian and Latin America still developing economically.	Developing countries
Illegal Immigrant or Illegal Alien	These words dehumanize the individual by stripping their identity down to a legal status.	Undocumented