

BECOMING US

Supporting Glossary of Terms

The following glossary is intended for use by teachers to inform their engagement with students on a variety of topics addressed in the *Becoming US* materials. These definitions are gathered primarily from the *Diversity Style Guide*, located online at diversitystyleguide.com, and from the exhibition *Many Voices, One Nation* and the book of the same name, among other sources.

A

abolition

Major American reform movement that sought to end slavery in America using a wide range of tactics and organizations. While abolitionists are commonly portrayed as white people deeply concerned about the plight of enslaved black people, many were African American. Free black people in the North also were stalwart in their dedication to the cause and provided financial support.

activist, advocate

An activist is someone who actively advocates for political or social change. Others who also push for causes, however, often are called advocates. Advocate is more neutral and a better choice, unless a subject describes himself or herself as an activist.

affirmative action

In the United States, affirmative action began under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It was a way to address discrimination based on gender and race. Other countries also have affirmative action policies. Rulings expanded the U.S. law to include disability, ethnic origin, and age. One myth is that African Americans are the chief beneficiaries of affirmative action. That is not true. The U.S. Department of Labor has said that white women have been the primary beneficiaries of affirmative action policies.

African American, African-American, Black, black

People in the United States who share a lineage that can be traced directly or indirectly to Africa. Black and African American do not necessarily mean the same thing and individuals may prefer one term over the other. It's best to ask. Some black people do not identify as African American. This lineage, while collective, contains a diverse array of histories, cultures, and experiences. This includes, but is not limited to, black, African American, Afro-Caribbean, Afro-Latino, and African immigrants living in the United States. Some people may identify themselves as African American to resist black as a socially constructed category. Others may identify this way to assert their American identity. There are many reasons one might identify as African American. Some people may identify as black because they do not feel connected to the American state. Others may identify as black because they do not identify with the African continent.

African diaspora

Black people of African descent who are scattered throughout the world; refers to black people whose ancestors were removed from the African continent through slavery and colonization, and dispersed worldwide, according to the [National Association of Black Journalists Style Guide](#). The African diaspora is a byproduct of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, which dispersed millions of people. The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database estimates that 12.5 million Africans were taken to the Americas and the Caribbean. About 1.8 million died en route. This forced move imposed a negative legacy. Overlaying new locations on African origins changed identities.

Afro-American

Archaic term to describe a black person. Popular in the 1960s and 1970s, the name was overtaken by black and later African American in the 1980s and 1990s. Do not use.

alien

A word used by the U.S. government to describe a foreign-born person who is not a citizen by naturalization or parentage. People who enter the United States legally are called resident aliens and they carry alien registration cards, also known as green cards because they used

to be green. While Webster's first definition of the term alien is in accordance with the government's interpretation, the dictionary also includes other, darker, meanings for the word, such as "a non-terrestrial being," "strange," "not belonging to one," "adverse," and "hostile." And Encyclopedia Britannica points out that "in early times, the tendency was to look upon the alien as an enemy and to treat him as a criminal or an outlaw." It is not surprising then that in 1798, in anticipation of a possible war with France, the U.S. Congress passed the Alien and Sedition Acts, which restricted "aliens" and curtailed press freedoms. By 1800, the laws had been repealed or had expired but they still cast a negative shadow over the word. In modern times, with science fiction growing in popularity, alien has come to mean a creature from outer space, and is considered pejorative by most immigrants.

Alien Land Laws

Enacted by many western states in the early 1900s, these laws prevented Asian people from owning land. Most of these laws were repealed in the late 1950s and 1960s.

American Indian

American Indian and Native American are both generally acceptable, although individuals may have a preference. It is usually best to refer to Native people by their specific tribe or nation, such as Navajo, Hopi, or Cherokee. Indigenous people in the United States were first referred to as Indians because Christopher Columbus believed he had reached the East Indies when he touched the shores of North America. Today, many Native people prefer to call themselves American Indian to avoid stereotypes associated with Indian.

anchor baby, anchor child

A child born to a non-citizen mother in a country that grants automatic citizenship to children born on its soil, especially if parents plan the birth to secure eventual citizenship for themselves and other members of their family. The term is pejorative; avoid except in quotations.

Angel Island

The West Coast counterpart to Ellis Island, New York. From 1910 to 1940, the U.S. Immigration Station processed hundreds of thousands of immigrants, the majority from China, at Angel Island. During World War II, Japanese and German POWs were detained at the station before being sent to facilities farther inland. Angel Island is now a state park run by the California Department of Parks and Recreation. A virtual tour of the island, produced by the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation, is available [here](#).

Anglo/Anglo-Saxon/Anglo American

[Adapted from [BBC History](#)] The term Anglo-Saxon refers to settlers from the German regions of Angeln and Saxony, who migrated to Britain after the fall of the Roman Empire around AD 410. In the context of the contemporary United States, Anglo American refers to people of European descent or the white race.

anti-Semitism

A prejudice against people of Jewish heritage. It has inspired the Holocaust, physical abuse, slander, economic and social discrimination, vandalism, and other crimes. Religious anti-Semitism is based on the idea that all Jews are eternally and collectively responsible for killing Jesus (known as *deicide*). It has been formally renounced by most major churches, led by the Catholic Church. Although Muslims revere Jesus as a prophet, they do not make the anti-Semitic claim against Jews because they do not believe that Jesus was crucified. Economic and political anti-Semitism is rooted in widespread 19th- and 20th-century claims that Jews were engaged in a plot to rule the world.

Arab

Refers to nation or people from an Arabic-speaking country. Not synonymous with Muslim. When referring to events in a specific country, name the country, rather than generalizing Arab. Arab is a noun for a person and it can be used as an adjective, as in Arab country. Do not imply that Arab equals Muslim, holy war, or terrorist. Note: Iran is not an Arab country. The majority of Iranian people are Persian and the language is Farsi.

Arab American, American Arab

A U.S. citizen or permanent resident who traces his or her ancestry to, or who immigrated from, Arabic-speaking places in the Middle East (southwestern Asia and northern Africa). Not all people who live in this region are Arabs. The U.S. government does not classify Arabs as a minority group for the purposes of employment and housing. Arab American is preferred over American Arab.

Aryan

Derived from the Sanskrit “arya,” or “noble.” In scholarly usage, a member of a people speaking one of a family of Indo-European languages, the presumed predecessor of much later languages spoken in Europe and the Indian subcontinent. In the late 19th century, the term became part of the anti-Semitic ideology that led to Nazism. In the modern usage of white supremacists, an Aryan is a non-Jewish white person.

Asian

Caution. A term as broad as European. In some usage, chiefly British, Asian refers to Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and others. In the United States, such ethnic groups would be known as South Asians, while Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese and others would be known as East Asians.

Asian Exclusion Acts

Laws in which Congress barred or sharply restricted the immigration of Asians to the United States. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 barred Chinese laborers and prohibited Chinese from applying for citizenship; it was repealed in 1943. The 1924 Oriental Exclusion Act banned immigration from Asia. Only after 1965, with immigration laws designed to encourage European immigration, did Asian immigration also expand.

Asian, U.S. Census definition of

The U.S. Census Bureau defines Asian as “a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.” Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander refers to: “a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.” The Census Bureau notes: “The racial categories included in the census questionnaire generally reflect a social definition of race recognized in this country and not an attempt to define race biologically, anthropologically, or genetically. In addition, it is recognized that the categories of the race item include racial and national origin or sociocultural groups.”

Asiatic

Avoid. A vestige of European colonialism and imperialism. A 19th-century adjective used at the time in “scientific” European treatises assuming the superiority of the white race.

assimilation

[Adapted from Wikipedia] Cultural assimilation is the process by which a person's or group's culture come to resemble those of another group. The term is used to refer to both individuals and groups; the latter case can refer to either foreign immigrants or native residents that come to be culturally dominated by another society. Cultural assimilation may involve either a quick or gradual change depending on circumstances of the group. Full assimilation occurs when new members of a society become indistinguishable from members of the other group. Whether or not it is desirable for an immigrant group to assimilate is often disputed by both members of the group and those of the dominant society. Cultural assimilation does not guarantee social likeness though, geographical and other natural barriers between cultures, even if started by the same dominant culture, will be culturally different.

B

baby boom

A baby boom is any period marked by a greatly increased birth rate, but the term is most often applied to the dramatic increase in births after World War II.

Balikbayan box

[Adapted from Wikipedia] A balikbayan box (literally “repatriate box”) is a corrugated box containing items sent to the Philippines by overseas Filipinos (known as “balikbayans”). The balikbayan box began appearing in the United States around the 1980s during an influx of overseas Filipino workers into the country. The Tariff and Customs Code of the Philippines provides duty- and tax-free privileges to balikbayan boxes sent to the Philippines by overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) as recognition of the magnitude of their contribution and sacrifices in foreign lands as well as bringing of a considerable amount of foreign exchange annually that contributed to the national recovery effort at that time.

bilingual/bilingualism/multilingualism

[Adapted from Wikipedia] The definition of multilingualism is a subject of debate. On one end of a sort of linguistic continuum, one may define multilingualism as complete competence and mastery in another language. The speaker would presumably have complete knowledge and control over the language so as to sound native. On the opposite end of the spectrum would be people who know enough phrases to get around as a tourist using the alternate language. Furthermore, what is considered a language can change, often for purely political purposes. A multilingual person is someone who can communicate in more than one language, either actively (through speaking, writing, or signing) or passively (through listening, reading, or perceiving). More specifically, the terms *bilingual* and *trilingual* are used to describe comparable situations in which two or three languages are involved.

biracial

Combination of two races. May be used to describe people or things. Not all biracial individuals self-identify in this manner. Do not use “mixed” as an alternative.

black leader

Avoid using the term. It implies that one person is the spokesperson for all black people. When referring to a local black person in a leadership position, state the organization that he or she belongs to.

Black Lives Matter, #BlackLivesMatter

A civil rights movement that started after the July 2013 acquittal of George Zimmerman in the Florida shooting death of African American teen Trayvon Martin. The Black Lives Matter movement, also written #BlackLivesMatter, was started as a Twitter hashtag by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi as “a call to action and a response to the virulent anti-Black racism that permeates our society,” according to the Black Lives Matter website. It gained momentum in 2014 after several other young African American men were killed by police in cities around the country. According to its website, #BlackLivesMatter does not believe black lives are more important than other lives. In fact, it says it stands with other oppressed peoples and views all lives as important. The campaign opposes police violence against black people. While the group says all lives matter, not all lives face the same threats. According to Black Lives Matter, once black people are free from oppression, the benefits will be wide reaching and transformative to society as a whole.

black Muslim

Black Muslim is a term that became associated with the Nation of Islam but is now considered

derogatory and should be avoided. The preferred term is simply member of the Nation of Islam. Also, because of that association, do not use black Muslim to describe African Americans who practice traditional Islam, whose tenets differ markedly from the Nation's. Instead, say African American Muslims.

black or African American, U.S. Census definition of

The U.S. Census Bureau defines black or African American as “a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.” The Census Bureau notes: “The racial categories included in the census questionnaire generally reflect a social definition of race recognized in this country and not an attempt to define race biologically, anthropologically, or genetically. In addition, it is recognized that the categories of the race item include racial and national origin or sociocultural groups.”

boomer

Describes a person who was born during the post-World War II baby boom between 1946 and 1964. Boomers and boomer generation are preferred over baby boomers, which might be perceived as condescending. As it captures an entire and diversified generation of 76 million people, they should not be lumped together unless compared to other generations.

Boricua

Puerto Rico was formerly known as Borikén, a self-governed island inhabited by the Taino people. The arrival of Spanish settlers during the 16th century decimated the Taino population and many were forced into assimilation. The term Boricua is a derivative of Borikén and connotes pride in Puerto Rican origins.

border

[Adapted from Wikipedia] A geographic boundary of political entities or legal jurisdictions, such as governments, sovereign states, federated states, and other subnational entities. Mostly contentious, borders may even foster the setting up of buffer zones. A difference has also been established in academic scholarship between border and frontier, the latter denoting a state of mind rather than state boundaries.

borderlands

[Adapted from Borderlands Toolkit by Emily Chiariello] A frontier or borderland where contentions and exchange have shaped U.S. identity today. A “border” is unique in different ways—physical and conceptual, national and local, personal and cultural. The United States is the product of contact between different societies from the colonial period to western expansion and global immigration and migration; borders exist at each intersection.

border patrol

[Adapted from Wikipedia and Kettering historic issue guide] The U.S. Border Patrol is an U.S. federal law enforcement agency. When it was created in 1924, heavy quotas were put in place by the Immigration Act of 1924, which restricted but did not completely end immigration to the United States. The U.S. Border Patrol's mission is to detect and prevent illegal aliens, terrorists, and terrorist weapons from entering the United States, and to prevent illegal trafficking of people and contraband.



Cajun, Creole

Cajun is a native of Louisiana originally descended from the Acadian French immigrants. Creole is a person of European parentage born in the West Indies, Central America, tropical South America, or the Gulf States.

Catholicism

[Adapted from Wikipedia] Catholicism is a term which in its broadest sense refers to the beliefs and practices of Christian denominations that describe themselves as Catholic in accordance with the Four Marks of the Church. The most frequent uses refer to the faith and practices of the Catholic Church, consisting of the Latin Church and 23 Eastern Catholic Churches in full communion with the Holy See of Rome. “Catholic” and “Catholicism” are also especially claimed by some other denominations, such as the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Oriental Orthodox Church, the Assyrian Church of the East, and some Protestant denominations, notably Anglicanism, in addition to Independent Catholicism.

Caucasian

Caution, not a synonym for American. Term for white, or relatively light-skinned, people originally from Europe and adjacent regions of Africa and Asia. Named after Caucasus mountain range between Russia and Georgia.

Central America

A tropical isthmus that connects North America to South America. Central America is bordered by Mexico to the north, Colombia to the southeast, the Caribbean Sea to the east, and the Pacific Ocean to the west. Central America consists of seven countries: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama.

Chican@

This post-internet construction simplifies “Chicano/Chicana” or “Chicano and/or Chicana.” Some academic studies departments have put this in their names. According to the University of Wisconsin at Madison Department of Chican@ and Latin@ Studies, “The @ ending (‘a’ at the center of ‘o’) offers a simultaneous presentation of both the feminine and masculine word endings of Chicana, Chicano, Latina, and Latino and allows the reader/speaker to choose the form she or he prefers.”

Chicana, Chicano

People of Mexican descent; Chicano refers to men and Chicana to women. The terms were originally considered derogatory. However the Chicano movement during the 1960s adopted these names in response to discrimination against Mexican Americans working under unfair labor and social conditions. These terms announce pride in indigenous ancestry, which was a significant ideological element of the Chicano movement.

Chinaman

Avoid. A slur, often applied to anyone of Asian heritage. A term from 19th-century America, specifically for Chinese workers who worked for small wages building the transcontinental railroad. “Chinaman’s chance” means no chance at all, and implies injury or death.

Chinese laundries

Caution. Can be racially charged. Legend has it that the first Chinese laundry was opened in 1851 in California by a failed Chinese miner. Inexpensive to open and posing no competition

to white-owned businesses, Chinese hand laundries proliferated, peaking in 1940, with more than 5,000 laundries in New York City alone. In California, Chinese were once permitted to own only restaurants and laundries. The Chinese laundry declined sharply with the introduction of coin-operated laundromats.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has asked not to be referred to as the Mormon Church and objects to its adherents being referred to as Mormons. In the first reference, the full name of the Church is preferred. When a shortened reference is needed, the terms “the Church” or the “Church of Jesus Christ” are encouraged. When referring to Church members, the terms “members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” or “Latter-day Saints” are preferred. The church was founded in 1830 by Joseph Smith. Smith said he was directed to a set of golden plates that contained a record of ancient inhabitants of the Americas who had migrated from Jerusalem. Smith said he translated this record with divine help and published it as the Book of Mormon. The book tells of a visit by the resurrected Jesus to these inhabitants in the Western Hemisphere, which is why its subtitle reads “Another Testament of Jesus Christ.” Mormons believe that Smith had a vision of God and Jesus Christ and that the church he founded is the restoration of true Christianity. In the 19th century, Mormons were persecuted for their beliefs and eventually fled to Utah, where they could practice their faith in peace.

Cinco de Mayo

Cinco de Mayo, which means May 5, is a Mexican holiday recalling victory over France in the 1862 Battle of Puebla, which occurred during the Franco-Mexican War. Cinco de Mayo festivities include parades, street festivals, mariachi music, and special foods in both Mexico and the United States. In the United States, Cinco de Mayo is considered a celebration of Mexican culture. Cinco de Mayo is not equivalent to the Fourth of July. Mexico celebrates its independence from Spain on Sept. 16.

citizenship

Citizenship of the United States is a status that entails specific rights, duties, and benefits. Citizenship is understood as a “right to have rights” since it serves as a foundation for a bundle of subsequent rights, such as the right to live and work in the United States and to receive federal assistance. There are two primary sources of citizenship: birthright citizenship, in which a person is presumed to be a citizen provided that they are born within the territorial limits of the United States, or other circumstances existing at the time of their birth (for example, citizenship of a parent), and naturalization, a process in which an immigrant applies for citizenship and is accepted. These two pathways to citizenship are specified in the Citizenship Clause of the Constitution’s 1868 Fourteenth Amendment. National citizenship signifies membership in the country as a whole; state citizenship, in contrast, signifies a relation between a person and a particular state and has application generally limited to domestic matters. U.S. law permits multiple citizenship. A citizen of another country naturalized as a U.S. citizen may retain their previous citizenship, though they must renounce allegiance to the other country. A U.S. citizen retains U.S. citizenship when becoming the citizen of another country, should that country’s laws allow it.

civil rights movement, Civil Rights Act

Often used to describe the struggles of black Americans between 1945 and 1970 to end discrimination and racial segregation. Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to guarantee basic civil rights for all Americans, regardless of race, after nearly a decade of nonviolent protests and marches, ranging from the 1955–1956 Montgomery bus boycott, to the student-led sit-ins of the 1960s, to the March on Washington

in 1963.

civil union

Legal status that provides same-sex couples some rights available to married couples in areas such as state taxes, medical decisions, and estate planning. Civil unions have been recognized by some states but not the U.S. government.

classism

Prejudiced thoughts and discriminatory actions based on difference in socioeconomic status, income, or class, usually by upper classes against people of lower socioeconomic status.

code switching

Changing the way one speaks depending on the situation at hand. Within the black community, some people speak differently with their friends than they do with their family. Some African Americans may use Standard English at work and the vernacular in familiar black spaces. When black people code switch, they are adjusting their speaking style to fit into a social context and to accommodate the speakers in that space. Code switching is a learned skill. It does not happen automatically. Youth from families where African American English is the dominant language will enter school speaking African American English. By the same token, youth from families where Standard English is the dominant language will enter school speaking Standard English. For either group, to master code switching requires dedicated, well-trained teachers and long-term experience and exposure to linguistic varieties other than the home language.

colonialism

The European Age of Exploration that began in the 16th century led, for good and ill, to the subjugation of less technologically advanced peoples as European colonies. One consequence of World War II was the rapid shedding of empire in the late 1940s, climaxing globally in the 1960s.

colored

An archaic term for black. In some African countries, colored denotes those of mixed racial ancestry. Do not use unless referring to official names or historical events, or in quotes.

colorism

Colorism occurs when someone with lighter skin is favored over someone with darker skin. Colorism occurs within all races, as all have varieties of skin tone and hair color. Although no longer common, the “brown paper bag test” was an example of this among African Americans. With that test, some lighter-skinned or “high yellow” African Americans would exclude people if their skin was darker than a brown paper bag.

community

By definition, community implies a shared like-mindedness. Avoid such phrases as “the Korean community.” In any group there is a diversity of opinion. Also, while many ethnic groups identify with the majority culture and faith of their home countries, some do not.

cultural misappropriation

Cultural appropriation occurs in TV and movies, music, cartoons, Halloween costumes, and language. It is when people use another group’s cultural elements or artifacts in ways that can ridicule or be negative. Some see appropriation as an assault on culture. Cultural collaboration

D

can lead to respectful sharing and fusion.

DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals)

DACA stands for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. This program provides temporary relief from deportation and employment authorization for individuals who would be eligible for the DREAM Act were it to become law. In 2012 DACA was created under President Barack Obama's executive authority to grant certain classes of people "deferred action" on their immigration cases.

developed countries, developed world

Terms that describe nations of the world that are considered more economically and technologically advanced. The terms *developed countries* and *developed world* are generally considered to be more current and accurate than *first world*.

dialect

Language forms, particularly oddities of pronunciation and syntax, that are peculiar to a region or a group. Avoid using dialect if it renders the speaker as ignorant or makes the person a subject of ridicule, even in quoted material. Rarely, use of dialect may be approved as bringing a sense of atmosphere that could not otherwise be achieved. If dialect is to be used, words are spelled phonetically and apostrophes indicate missing sounds. Be accurate and avoid exaggeration.

diaspora

Diaspora means "to scatter" in Greek, and the term is commonly used "to describe a community of people who live outside their shared country of origin or ancestry but maintain active connections with it," according to the International Diaspora Engagement Alliance. "A diaspora includes both emigrants and their descendants. While some people lose their attachment to their ancestral homeland, others maintain a strong connection to a place that their ancestors may have left generations ago. Many Americans come from mixed heritage and therefore can claim membership in multiple diaspora communities." The term is commonly used to describe the African diaspora or black diaspora, the Jewish diaspora (the dispersion of Israelites, Judahites, and later Jews out of their ancestral homeland in the Land of Israel), and the Indian diaspora, the migration of people from India. Diasporas are often linked to an historic event, such as the expulsion of Jews from Judea, the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, the Irish Famine, etc.

DREAM Act

The DREAM Act stands for Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors. It is was first introduced in the U.S. Senate in 2001 to provide legal residency to undocumented youth who meet several criteria. Those include arriving in the United States as a minor, completing a high school diploma and completing two years in the military or at a four-year institution of higher learning. Supporters say the DREAM Act would help people and benefit the country

E

economically. Opponents say it rewards people for breaking the law and encourages illegal immigration. The DREAM Act remains a proposal and was never passed.

English-only movement

An effort to make English the official language of the United States. About half the states have adopted English-only laws. Opponents say such laws are unnecessary, divisive, and even racist.

enslaved (person)

An enslaved person is a human being who has been classed as property and forced to work for nothing. This language is often used instead of the word slave, to refer to the person and their experiences and to avoid the use of dehumanizing language.

ethnic group

A group of people who self-identify with one another because of geographical, linguistic, cultural, religious, and other ties. In the 19th and 20th centuries, it was common to refer to ethnic groups as races, e.g. the Hungarian race.

ethnicity, mention of

A person's ethnicity should not be mentioned unless relevant. This also applies to references to sexual orientation and religion. Avoid stereotypes.

Executive Order 9066

A war measure following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Signed February 19, 1942, by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, it led to the incarceration in camps of about 120,000 people of Japanese heritage, two-thirds of whom were U.S. citizens. A divided cabinet recommended the measure to Roosevelt, despite an affirmation by the Office of Naval Intelligence of the loyalty of Japanese Americans. The order was designed to combat sabotage, but Americans of German and Italian heritage were largely exempt. Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, and imperial Japan formed the Axis. The United States Supreme Court repeatedly affirmed the constitutionality of the order, but in 1983 Congress called it "a grave injustice."

exotic

Avoid. When describing women of Asian and Pacific Islander heritage, it often implies a departure from a white norm. Swedes, for example, are not described in the United States as exotic.

Filipino/Pilipino

Refers to an inhabitant of the Philippines, the former Spanish possession and American colony. The term also refers to the official language of the Philippines. Filipino American refers to those who share its heritage and culture. Some Filipino Americans, often younger, prefer Pilipino because Tagalog, the leading dialect of the Philippines, lacks an "F" sound.

First Nations

First Nations is a term used to describe Aboriginal peoples of Canada who are ethnically neither Métis nor Inuit, according to a list of terms compiled by the First Nations and Indigenous Studies Program at the University of British Columbia. This term came into common usage in the 1970s and 1980s and generally replaced the term Indian, although unlike Indian, the term First Nations does not have a legal definition.

First World



Outdated term that refers to the developed, capitalist, industrial countries with more or less common political and economic interests in North America, Western Europe, Japan, and Australia. The term was first coined in the 1940s and was used during the Cold War, with the Second World referring to the communist countries of China and the Soviet bloc. Third World referred to the less developed countries of Latin America, Africa, and Asia. With the end of the Cold War, globalization, and changing geopolitics, the “Three World” model is no longer relevant. Instead, some use developed world countries and developing world countries.

gender fluidity

Gender fluidity conveys a wider, more flexible range of gender expression, with interests and behaviors that may even change from day to day. Gender-fluid children do not feel confined by restrictive boundaries of stereotypical expectations of girls or boys. In other words, a child may feel they are a girl some days and a boy on others, or possibly feel that neither term describes them accurately. It is best to ask people who are gender fluid which pronouns they prefer.

gender identity

One’s internal, deeply held sense of one’s gender. For transgender people, their own internal gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. Most people have a gender identity of man or woman (or boy or girl). For some people, their gender identity does not fit neatly into one of those two choices. Unlike gender expression, gender identity is not visible to others.

Gender Identity Disorder

Outdated, avoid.

gender nonconforming

A term used to describe some people whose gender expression is different from conventional expectations of masculinity and femininity. Please note that not all gender non-conforming people identify as transgender; nor are all transgender people gender non-conforming. Many people have gender expressions that are not entirely conventional—that fact alone does not make them transgender. Many transgender men and women have gender expressions that are conventionally masculine or feminine. Simply being transgender does not make someone gender non-conforming. The term is not a synonym for transgender or transsexual and should only be used if someone self-identifies as gender non-conforming. It is best to ask gender non-conforming people which pronouns they prefer.

gender normative

Refers to people whose sex assignment at birth corresponds to their gender identity and expression.

gender role

This is the set of activities, expectations, and behaviors assigned to females and males by society. Our culture recognizes two basic gender roles: masculine (having the qualities attributed to males) and feminine (having the qualities attributed to females). People who step out of their socially assigned gender roles are sometimes referred to as transgender. Other cultures have three or more gender roles.

genocide

The deliberate killing of a large group of people, especially those of a particular ethnic, religious, linguistic, racial, or cultural group or nation. Some examples of genocide include the Armenian Genocide, the Assyrian Genocide, the Greek Genocide, the Holocaust, the

1971 Bangladesh Genocide, the Cambodian Genocide, the Kurdish Genocide, the Bosnian Genocide, and the Rwandan Genocide.

ghetto

Term used as a synonym for sections of cities inhabited by poor people or minorities. Avoid this description because of its negative connotation. Often the name of the neighborhood is the best choice. Section, district, or quarter may also be used. Urban is also acceptable.

Great Migration, the

This was a post-Reconstruction move within the United States from the South to the North. From about 1916 to 1970, some 6 million African Americans moved out of the rural South to cities in the Northeast, Midwest, and West. People fled lynchings and other forms of violence and segregation. They sought opportunity. After moving, they faced some of the same issues and met new forms of segregation in housing, education, employment, and more.

green card

A United States Permanent Resident Card. Actually pink, this identification card allows an immigrant to reside and live permanently in the United States. Green-card holders are also able to work in the United States, to travel, and to receive some government benefits. A green card holder is not a U.S. citizen but can live in the United States permanently.

Gullah

Creole blend of Elizabethan English and African languages, born of necessity on Africa's slave coast and developed in slave communities of isolated plantations of the coastal South. Even after the Sea Islands were freed in 1861, the Gullah speech flourished because of the islands' separation from the mainland. Access to the islands was by water until the 1950s.

Gypsy, gypsy, gipsy

H

A word used to indicate Romani (also spelled Romany) or Roma people, a traditionally itinerant ethnic group that lives in Europe and has branches in the Americas, Asia, and North Africa. The word Gypsy (sometimes capitalized as a proper noun when referring to the ethnic group and sometimes spelled Gipsy) has negative connotations and many Romani people see it as a racial slur. In general, it's best to use Romani or Roma people when referring to the ethnic group unless people self-identify as Gypsies. The term gyp, which means to cheat or swindle, likely comes from Gypsy and is seen as a negative stereotype of Roma as swindlers and thieves.

Hanukkah

The Jewish Festival of Lights. It usually falls in early or mid-December. The eight-day holiday celebrates the Maccabees' victory over the Syrians in the second century B.C. The Maccabees were a first- and second-century B.C. Jewish family that brought about the restoration of Jewish religious and political life. They also made several unsuccessful attempts to overthrow Roman rule in Judea. Hanukkah is the preferred spelling.

Hapa

Once considered derogatory, hapa comes from the Hawaiian phrase hapa haole (pronounced "hah-puh how-lee") meaning "half white/foreigner." It now describes anyone whose heritage is white plus another racial or ethnic group, but especially Asians and Pacific Islanders. The term is now considered by many to be one of positive self-identification.

Hart-Celler Act

Striving for the ideals of civil equality and equal opportunity, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (Hart-Celler Act) instituted new policies to reunite immigrant families and attract skilled labor, abolishing the old quota system of the National Origins Act of 1924. This new law changed the face of America in unexpected ways. Immigration from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East increased, more professionals left their homelands for careers in the United States, and new restrictions were placed on the countries of the Western Hemisphere, including Mexico.

Hawaiian

Caution. An ethnic group. Refers to a person of Polynesian descent. Unlike a term like Californian, Hawaiian should not be used for everyone living in Hawaii. The distinction is not trivial. If Wales were the 51st state, not everyone living in Wales would be Welsh.


Hispanic

An umbrella term referring to a person whose ethnic origin is in a Spanish-speaking country, as well as residents or citizens of the United States with Latin American ancestry, except for those from Brazil, which is not a Spanish-speaking country. Federal policy defines "Hispanic" not as a race, but as an ethnicity; it notes that Hispanics can be of any race. The term Hispanic is more commonly used in the Eastern United States and is generally favored by those of Caribbean and South American ancestry or origin.

Hispanic paradox

The Hispanic paradox refers to studies showing that although Hispanic communities in the United States tend to have a higher risk factor for illnesses, they tend to have a longer life expectancy than non-Hispanics with the same health problems. Several studies have attributed this to family cohesion.

Hispaniola



The large Caribbean island where Christopher Columbus made his first settlement. The name means “Isle of Spain.” It contains two countries: The Dominican Republic on the east, where Columbus landed, and Haiti on the west.

Hmong (also Mong or Muong)

An ethnic group living in southern China, Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand. Laotian civil war in mid-1970s led to an exodus to the United States.

illegal alien

Avoid. Alternative terms are undocumented worker or undocumented immigrant. The pertinent federal agencies use this term for individuals who do not have documents to show they can legally visit, work, or live here. Many find the term offensive and dehumanizing because it criminalizes the person rather than the actual act of illegally entering or residing in the United States. The term does not give an accurate description of a person’s conditional U.S. status, but rather demeans an individual by describing them as an alien.

illegal immigrant

Avoid. Illegal immigrant is a term used to describe the immigration status of people who do not have the federal documentation to show they are legally entitled to work, visit, or live here. People who are undocumented according to federal authorities do not have the proper visas to be in the United States legally. Many enter the country illegally, but a large number of this group initially had valid visas, but did not return to their native countries when their visas expired. Some former students fall into the latter category. The term criminalizes the person rather than the actual act of illegally entering or residing in the United States without federal documents. Terms such as illegal alien or illegal immigrant can often be used pejoratively in common parlance and can pack a powerful emotional wallop for those on the receiving end. Instead, use undocumented immigrant or undocumented worker, both of which are terms that convey the same descriptive information without carrying the psychological baggage. Avoid using illegal(s) as a noun.

illegal, illegals

Avoid. Alternative terms are undocumented immigrant or undocumented worker. This term has been used to describe the immigration status of people who do not have the federal documentation to show they are legally entitled to work, visit, or live here. The term criminalizes the person rather than the actual act of illegally entering or residing in the United States without documents.

immigrant

Similar to discussing a person’s race, mentioning that a person is a first-generation immigrant could be used to provide readers or viewers with background information, but the relevance of the term should be made apparent.

immigration/migration

[Adapted from Wikipedia] Immigration is the international movement of people into a destination country of which they are not natives or where they do not possess citizenship in order to settle or reside there, especially as permanent residents or naturalized citizens, or to take-up employment as a migrant worker or temporarily as a foreign worker. Migration is a broader term used to describe movement within a nation, or movement not tied to citizenship.

Indian Country

Indian Country is a legal term used in Title 18 of the U.S. Code. It broadly defines federal and

tribal jurisdiction in crimes affecting American Indians on reservations. It also has popular usage, describing reservations and areas with Native American populations.

Indian, Indian American

Use Indian or person from India to refer to a person with ancestral ties to India. Use Indian American to refer to a U.S. permanent resident or citizen with ancestral ties to India. Do not confuse with American Indian. Do not use to refer to indigenous peoples of the United States.

Indigenous

Encompasses a variety of Aboriginal groups, according to a list of terms compiled by the First Nations and Indigenous Studies Program at the University of British Columbia. It is most frequently used in an international, transnational, or global context.

indigenous religion

Refers to the myriad religious traditions of local and regional societies where language, kinship systems, mythologies, and rituals shape religious practices that may borrow from traditional religion but are unique to the local culture.

interdenominational

A congregation or organization that is formally approved or under the jurisdiction of more than one denomination. It is not a synonym for nondenominational.

interfaith

Refers to activities or events that draw people from entirely different religious traditions, such as Christians, Jews, Buddhists, and Muslims. It is not a synonym for ecumenical, which refers to a multiplicity of Christian traditions, or interdenominational.

internment, Japanese

During World War II, the incarceration of about 120,000 men, women, and children of Japanese ancestry, two-thirds of them U.S. citizens. They were ordered to sell their homes and businesses, usually at a steep discount, to whites and then move to “relocation centers.” The last internees were released in 1946. Some advocates urge the use of “incarceration” instead of internment as a more accurate depiction.

Islam

Religion founded in seventh-century Mecca by the Prophet Muhammad, who said Allah (God), through the Angel Gabriel, revealed the Quran to him between 610 and 632, the year of his death. Followers of Islam are called Muslims. They worship in a mosque, and their weekly holy day is Friday. Islam is the second-largest religion in the world, after Christianity. After Muhammad’s death, Islam split into two distinct branches—Sunni and Shiite—in an argument over who would succeed him. Sunnis make up an estimated 85 percent of all Muslims. Shiites are the majority in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, and Bahrain, while Sunnis are the majority in other Islamic countries. In Sunni and Shiite Islam, there are various *madhhabs*, or schools of thought, and other theological traditions. There is no central religious authority, so theological and legal interpretations can vary from region to region, country to country, and even mosque to mosque. Capitalize all Islamic titles when used before a name and lowercase otherwise. Use the title and name on first reference and only the person’s last name after that. Shiites and Sunnis use a few of the same religious titles but differ on others. Shiites have a more defined hierarchy than Sunnis. For example, Sunnis call people who lead congregational prayers *imams*, while Shiites almost exclusively reserve *imam* to refer to any of the twelve descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, who Shiites believe were his rightful successors.

Sheikh, on the other hand, is used in both communities, but can be used either as a term of respect—to address older men, for example—or for a formally trained scholar. Among Sufi Muslims, *sheikh* holds a more exclusive status that is reserved for highly trained scholars and heads of Sufi orders. Among Shiites, *mullahs* are lower-level clergy who generally have only rudimentary religious education. A *hujjat al-Islam* is more learned than a *mullah* but does not have the authority to issue legal rulings. *Mujtahids* and *faqihs* are jurists with the authority to issue rulings. A higher-level *mujtahid* is a *marja*, the most educated of whom are called *ayatollahs*. In addition to *imam* and *sheikh*, Sunni titles include *mufti* and *grand mufti*, which indicate a higher status usually conferred by an institution. *Grand muftis* are usually the top

K

religious scholar in a country. Because the Quran is in Arabic, it is a common misconception that all Arabs are Muslim and all Muslims are Arab; neither is true.

Issei

Term for Japanese immigrants originating from the Japanese language term for “first generation.” In the American context, the term is generally understood to apply to those who migrated prior to the cessation of Japanese immigration to the United States under the dictates of the Immigration Act of 1924, the bulk arriving after 1885.

Kwanzaa



A celebration of African heritage and principles. It occurs December 26 through January 1. It grew out of the Black Nationalist Movement in the mid-1960s. From the Swahili phrase “first fruits of the harvest,” Kwanzaa celebrates seven principles, which are also identified in the East African language. They are: *umoja* (unity), *kujichagulia* (self-determination), *ujima* (collective responsibility), *ujamaa* (cooperative economics), *nia* (purpose), *kuumba* (creativity), and *imani* (faith). Kwanzaa also has seven symbols. They are fruits; vegetables or nuts; a mat; a candleholder; seven candles (three red, three green and one black); corn; gifts; and a communal cup signifying unity. Kwanzaa was intended to be independent of religion, though some families celebrate Kwanzaa with religious holidays.

Latin@

This post-internet construction simplifies “Latino/Latina” or “Latino and/or Latina.” Some academic departments have put this in their names. According to the University of Wisconsin at Madison Department of Chican@ and Latin@ Studies, “The @ ending (‘a’ at the center of ‘o’) offers a simultaneous presentation of both the feminine and masculine word endings of Chicana, Chicano, Latina, and Latino and allows the reader/speaker to choose the form she or he prefers.”

Latina/Latino

Umbrella terms referring to residents or citizens of the United States with Latin American ancestry. Latina is the feminine form of Latino and means a woman or girl. Use Latina(s) for a woman or women; use Latino(s) for a man or men. Latino is principally used west of the Mississippi, where it has displaced Chicano and Mexican American. In 2011, the *Los Angeles Times* amended its style guide to advise journalists to use Latino over Hispanic in virtually all circumstances “in keeping with the practices and sensibilities of residents of our region.” Federal policy defines “Latino” not as a race, but as an ethnicity; it notes that Latinos can be of any race.

Latinx

Pronounced “La-teen-ex.” An alternative to Latino or Latina that refers to people of Latin



American descent who don't necessarily identify as female or male. This could include people who identify as agender, nonbinary, gender non-conforming, genderqueer, and gender fluid.

LGBT/GLBT/LGBTQ/LGBTQQIA*

LGBT is an abbreviation for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender.” The Q in LGBTQ can stand for questioning (still exploring one’s sexuality) or queer, or sometimes both (and it is sometimes written LGBTQQ). LGBTQ is best used only in quotations or for formal names of organizations or events. In recent years initials have been added to represent intersex, asexual, pansexual, and polyamorous. LGBTQIA and LGBTQQIA, sometimes with a * at the end, are increasingly being used to represent the community.

Manifest Destiny

An expansionist rhetoric based on the belief that the United States was predestined to become a powerful, white Protestant “Empire of Liberty” spreading democracy from the East Coast to the West.

McCarran-Walter Act

Officially known as the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, it allowed Asians to apply for citizenship but set immigration quotas from each Asian country at only 100 annually. Liberalization of this law, in 1965, allowed the first large-scale migration of Asians into the United States in the 20th century.

Mexican, Mexican American

Use “Mexican” when referring to anyone of Mexican citizenship, and use “Mexican American” when referring to those of Mexican ancestry who are permanent residents or citizens of the United States.

Mexican-American War

[Adapted from Wikipedia] The Mexican–American War was an armed conflict between the United States of America and the United Mexican States from 1846 to 1848. It followed in the wake of the 1845 U.S. annexation of Texas, which Mexico considered part of its territory in spite of its de facto secession in the 1836 Texas Revolution. The 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the war and specified its major consequence: the Mexican Cession of the territories of Alta California and Santa Fe de Nuevo México to the United States. The United States agreed to pay \$15 million compensation for the physical damage of the war. In addition, the United States assumed \$3.25 million of debt owed by the Mexican government to U.S. citizens. Mexico acknowledged the loss of Texas and thereafter cited the Rio Grande as its national border with the United States.

midlife

References to people in midlife are more inclusive than using boomer(s), a term identifying one’s birth cohort. Midlife generally identifies the years between people’s early 40s and early 60s, but precision is somewhat slippery. Be aware that middle age traditionally was considered to begin at age 35, when 70 was regarded as a typical benchmark for very old age.

militant

Commonly used to describe an aggressive activist working for a cause; a person eager to engage in a struggle to achieve his or her goal, or can be used to mean any individual engaged in warfare, a fight, or combat, or generally serving as a soldier. A militant view sometimes constitutes an extremist position. A militant state denotes being in a physically aggressive posture supporting an ideology or cause. Should not be used in place of terrorist. Militant is deemed to be a neutral term, whereas terrorist indicates reprehensible behavior by an

individual or organization regardless of the motivations.

minority

Caution. Not a synonym for people of color. Group or groups differing especially in race, religion, or ethnicity from the majority of a population. Collective when used as a noun. Does not refer to an individual, so avoid such phrases as: There are three minorities on the council. Also, women do not constitute a minority, although they may be linked with minorities in various civil-rights contexts. Avoid saying, for example, the program is designed to encourage the representation of minorities if it also encourages the representation of women. Better to say the program is designed to encourage the representation of women and minorities. A better alternative is people of color when referring to a group.

mixed

Sometimes used to describe a person who is biracial. Avoid the term in this context.

mixed-status couple, mixed-status family

Usually refers to couples or families with members who have different immigration status. A mixed-status family, for example, might have a father who is an undocumented immigrant, a mother who is a legal resident and a child who was born in the United States and is a citizen. Mixed-status relationship and mixed-status couple are also sometimes used by health workers to describe a sexual relationship in which one partner is HIV-positive and the other is HIV-negative, according to AIDS.gov, a website managed by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.

model minority

The belief that a particular ethnic, racial, or religious group achieves greater success than the population average. In the United States, this myth most often refers to Asians. Concerns are that the myth implies that some people get ahead because of the group they are in, or that group members who do not succeed are inferior. The myth also ignores the history and ongoing experiences of discrimination these groups face and masks socioeconomic diversity within these groups.

mulatto

A person who has a white parent and a black parent. Avoid using the term; it is considered insensitive. Better to use biracial.



Muslim, Muslims

A Muslim is a follower of Muhammad and the tenets and practices of Islam. The word Muslim is a noun; use the adjective Islamic when referring to the Islamic faith or the Islamic world.

multicultural/multiculturalism

In the 1980s and 1990s the concept of “multiculturalism” emerged as a popular way to define the complexities of social diversity. The concept suggests that Americans are not a single people but rather they comprise a diverse set of ethnic and racial groups working and living together.

nation

Federally recognized tribes are considered self-governing—or sovereign nations—by Congress.

Nation of Islam

A religious and political organization formed in 1930 by Wallace Fard Muhammad with the stated aim of “resurrecting” the spiritual, mental, social, and economic condition of black people in America and the world. Its tenets differ markedly from those of traditional Islam. Followers should be referred to as members of the Nation of Islam. The term black Muslim, once associated with the organization, is now considered derogatory and should be avoided.

Native American, Native

Native American, Native, and American Indian are all generally acceptable, although individuals may have a preference. It is usually best to refer to Native people by their specific tribe or nation, such as Navajo, Hopi, or Cherokee, or to ask people which term they prefer. Native American gained traction in the 1960s for American Indians and Alaska Natives. Over time, Native American has been expanded to include all native peoples of the continental United States and some in Alaska.

Native Hawaiian

Known as *Kanaka Maoli* in Hawaiian, Native Hawaiians trace their lineage and language to Polynesians, including Tahitians, Maoris, and Samoans. Starting in 2000, the federal government recognized Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders as a distinct group, including in Census counts.

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, U.S. Census definition of

The U.S. Census Bureau, which adheres to the 1997 Office of Management and Budget standards on race and ethnicity, defines Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander as “a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.”

Negro



Use African American or black. Do not use to describe a person of African descent. Do not use Negress. Term acceptable in organization names and historical references, for example, National Council of Negro Women or Negro National Anthem.

Nisei, nisei

Term for the children of Japanese immigrants, originating from the Japanese language term for “second generation.” In the American context, the term is generally understood to apply specifically to the American-born—and thus U.S. citizen—children of Japanese immigrants who arrived prior to the cessation of Japanese immigration to the United States under the dictates of the Immigration Act of 1924.

Okies

A pejorative term for people from Oklahoma dating from the Dust Bowl and Great Depression, when thousands of poor people left the state, many heading to California.

older (people, adults, individuals, Americans and so on)

A national survey of nearly 100 age-beat journalists found that this is the top-choice term, seen by reporters as the more neutral and flexible general descriptor for people in later life.

Operation Pedro Pan

Through Operation Pedro Pan, between 1960 and 1962, over fourteen thousand children

P

traveled from Cuba to the United States. After the Cuban Revolution, Cuban parents feared for their children's futures under communism. They entrusted the Catholic Church, aid societies, and the U.S. State Department to connect their children with awaiting relatives and friends. These groups also cared for children until the families could be reunited.

Oriental

Caution. Many Asian Americans liken "Oriental" to "Negro," a term of condescension. A vestige of European imperialism, the term, at minimum, is vague. In art, it may include countries such as China and Japan, but exclude Turkey. In rugs, it may mean India and China and include Turkey. In food, it may mean China or Japan, but not India, Vietnam, or the Philippines.

Pacific Islander

U.S. Census term, referring to one of eight groups: Fijian, Guamanian, Hawaiian, Northern Mariana Islander, Palauan, Samoan, Tahitian, and Tongan.

people of color

The *National Association of Black Journalists' Style Guide* says, "Acceptable use as a synonym for minorities. May also use to describe groups such as journalists of color or women of color." However, some people feel uncomfortable with the idea of lumping people of different groups together.

people-first language

Language that avoids defining a person in terms of his or her disability. In most cases, this entails placing the reference to the disability after a reference to a person, as in *a person with a disability* rather than *the disabled person*. The National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities of the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention offers an easy-to-follow guide on people-first language. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association acknowledges that utilizing people-first language sometimes can result in awkward sentence structuring. As such, the organization states that "deviations from people-first language should be allowed in cases when the only alternative is awkward sentence structure." Use people-first language whenever possible.

post-racial

A controversial term that describes a society that's devoid of racial preference, discrimination, and prejudice.

powwow

Use only when referring to the title of a specific American Indian event. Avoid if referring to a general gathering because the term evokes a stereotypical image of American Indians. Comes from the Narragansett word for shaman. It is a celebration and social gathering, honoring sacred American Indian traditions through dancing, drumming, singing, and the gathering of people. A powwow may be held to honor an individual or for a special occasion. Most commonly, it is a social event.

Protestantism

[Adapted from Wikipedia] Protestantism is a form of Christianity that originated with

the Reformation, a movement against what its followers considered to be errors in the Roman Catholic Church. It is one of the three major divisions of Christendom, together with Roman Catholicism and the Eastern Orthodox Church. The term derives from the letter of protestation from German Lutheran princes in 1529 against an edict of the Diet of Speyer condemning the teachings of Martin Luther as heretical. With more than 900 million adherents, nearly 40 percent of Christians worldwide, Protestantism is more divided theologically and ecclesiastically than either the Eastern Orthodox Church or Roman Catholicism, lacking both structural unity and central human authority. A majority of Protestants are members of a handful of denominational families: Adventism, Anglicanism,



Baptist churches, Reformed churches, Lutheranism, Methodism, and Pentecostalism. Nondenominational, evangelical, charismatic, independent, and other churches are on the rise, and constitute a significant part of Protestant Christianity.

Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico is a territory of the United States. Spain held Puerto Rico as a colony for more than 400 years and ceded it to the United States in 1898 at the end of the Spanish-American War. It has been under U.S. rule as an unincorporated territory ever since. Puerto Ricans were made citizens in 1917, though they had not requested it. In 1952, with Congressional approval, Puerto Ricans voted to become a commonwealth. This did not fundamentally change the relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States.

queer

Traditionally a pejorative term, queer has been appropriated by some LGBT people as a self-affirming umbrella term. However, it is not universally accepted even within the LGBT community and should be avoided unless describing someone who self-identifies that way or in a direct quote. When Q is seen at the end of “LGBT,” it typically means queer and/or questioning.

quinceañera

Pronounced “keen-see-nyair-ah.” A Hispanic celebration of a girl’s 15th birthday, signifying her transition from youth to adulthood. This is both a social and religious event and, like

R

many other Hispanic traditions, emphasizes the importance of family. A quinceañera typically begins with a Mass that is attended by the girl's parents, grandparents, godparents, and family. The Mass is followed by a reception with food, family, music, dancing, and more. In past times, the quinceañera signified that a girl was prepared for marriage. In contemporary times, it tends to mean that a girl is ready to begin formal dating. Some families will throw a quinceañera for a son.

quotas

A specific or prescribed number that must be met to reach a certain goal. A buzzword often used in the affirmative action debate, however, it is not synonymous with affirmative action, which is a practice, activity, or program aimed at correcting the enduring effects of discrimination and helping to diversify businesses, organizations, and schools.

race

A person's race should not be mentioned unless relevant. This also applies to references to ethnicity, sexual orientation, and religion. Avoid stereotypes.

race card, "play the race card"

To say someone is "playing the race card" is to say they are injecting race into a discussion. To say someone is doing this can be an attempt to deflect, diminish, or discredit race's effects. Black feminist scholar bell hooks writes that the expression "trivializes discussions of racism, implying it's all just a game." She calls this a backlash against talk about race, "more often than not representing it as mere hysteria."

race, U.S. Census definitions of

According to its website, the [U.S. Census Bureau](#) adheres to the 1997 Office of Management and Budget standards on race and ethnicity, which guide the Census Bureau in classifying written responses to the race question: White – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. Black or African American – A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa. American Indian or Alaska Native – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment. Asian – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands. The 1997 OMB standards permit the reporting of more than one race. An individual's response to the race question is based upon self-identification.

rainbow flag

A flag of six equal horizontal stripes (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet) symbolizing the diversity of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities.

red

A good-luck color in several cultures, including Indian and Chinese. It is a favored color for weddings in both cultures and it is the traditional color for the bindi worn by Indian women.

redneck

A derogatory term for whites. Do not use.

redskin

Avoid. An overtly racist term that can be compared to the N-word. Some media organizations no longer use the term when referring to the Washington, D.C., professional football team. The Native American Journalists Association strongly urges news outlets to limit use of racial team names and images.

refugee

[Adapted from Wikipedia] A refugee is a displaced person who has been forced to cross national boundaries and who cannot return home safely. Such a person may be called an asylum seeker until granted refugee status. The term refugee is often used in different contexts: in everyday usage it refers to a forcibly displaced person who has fled their country of origin; in a more specific context it refers to such a person who was, on top of that, granted refugee status in the country the person fled to. In order to be given refugee status the person must have applied for asylum. This person was then, whilst waiting for a decision, an asylum seeker. However, a displaced person who would legally be entitled to refugee status may never apply for asylum, or may not be allowed to apply in the country they fled to and thus not be an asylum seeker.

remittances

Remittances are money and goods for family or friends in a foreign worker's countries of origin. In the late 1900s the areas receiving the largest amount of U.S. remittances were Mexico, India, China, the Philippines, the Caribbean, and many African countries. This money sustains families and communities abroad, and contributes substantially to some home countries' economies.

reparations

Reparations are made to right past wrongs. They are often payments. The United States has paid more than \$1.5 billion to settle claims made by black farmers in a class-action lawsuit

S

against the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The case was called *Pigford v. Glickman*. It was about discrimination in farm loans and assistance paid between 1981 and 1996. In 1989, U.S. Representative John Conyers (D-Detroit) began introducing bills to create a commission to study more sweeping reparations for events dating back to slavery. Those bills have not advanced. Japanese Americans interned during World War II have received \$1.6 billion in reparations and a formal apology from the U.S. government. Native Americans have received several payments including a \$3.4 billion settlement in 2012.

reservation

Indian reservations are areas of land reserved by the U.S. government as permanent tribal homelands. The United States established its reservation policy for American Indians in 1787. In 2015 there were 326 reservations. About 56 million acres are in reservations and trust land. More than 60 percent of American Indians live away from reservations.

Sansei, sansei

Term for third-generation Japanese Americans, originating from the Japanese language term for “third generation.” In the American context, the term is understood to refer to the grandchildren of Japanese immigrants who arrived prior to the cessation of Japanese immigration to the United States under the dictates of the Immigration Act of 1924.

senior, senior citizen

Use the term sparingly; can be discriminatory in nature; the preferred terminology is older adults.

shaman

A spiritual leader in a tribal society who heals people by channeling spirits, often in an altered state. Sometimes referred to as a medicine man or witch doctor. It is a description rather than a formal title; do not capitalize, even when used with a name.

slave

Avoid this outdated term to refer to the person. The proper term is enslaved person. An enslaved person is a human being who has been classed as property and forced to work for nothing.

slavery

[Adapted from Wikipedia] Slavery is, in the strictest sense of the term, any system in which principles of property law are applied to people, allowing individuals to own, buy, and sell other individuals, as a de jure form of property. A slave is unable to withdraw unilaterally from such an arrangement and works without remuneration. Many scholars now use the term chattel slavery to refer to this specific sense of legalized slavery. In a broader sense, however, the word slavery may also refer to any situation in which an individual is de facto forced to work against their own will. Scholars also use the more generic terms such as unfree labor or forced labor, to refer to such situations. Slavery in the United States was the legal institution of human chattel enslavement, primarily of Africans and African Americans, that existed in the United States of America in the 18th and 19th centuries after it gained independence and before the end of the American Civil War. Slavery had been practiced in British North America from early colonial days, and was legal in all thirteen colonies at the time of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. The Thirteenth Amendment, abolishing slavery except as punishment for a crime, was passed by the Senate in April 1864, and by the House of Representatives in January 1865. The amendment did not take effect until it was ratified by

three-fourths of the states, which occurred on December 6, 1865, when Georgia ratified it. On that date, all remaining slaves became officially free.

Spanglish

An informal hybrid of Spanish and English. It is used among people who know both languages



and who switch between languages when one language describes what they are trying to say better than the other. Linguists call that code switching.

stereotypes

The word comes from the ancient Greek for “fixed impression.” Walter Lippmann, an American journalist, popularized the word, a printing-press term, as a metaphor for “a picture in our heads” that could be true or, more often, false. Examples of stereotypes include *geisha*, *delivery boy*, *manicurist*, and *Samurai* (all used metaphorically).

Stonewall

The Stonewall Inn tavern in New York City’s Greenwich Village was the site of several nights of raucous protests after a police raid on June 28, 1969. Although not the nation’s first gay civil rights demonstration, Stonewall is now regarded as the birth of the modern gay civil rights movement.

Tagalog

Pronounced tah-GAH-log. Widely spoken in the Philippines, and one of scores of local and regional dialects.

Tejano

A Texan of Mexican descent. Tejano derives from “Coahuiltejano,” a name given to the citizens of the Mexican State Coahuila y Tejas, now Texas. Tejano culture includes folk music synthesized from European and Mexican styles and contributions to Tex-Mex cuisine. Hispanic and Anglo-Saxon settlers who lived in the area during the 18th century created a bilingualism that later shaped the Tejano language.

telenovela

A type of “limited-run” television drama that is very popular in Latin America and has had success in the United States and elsewhere. Telenovelas are similar to traditional U.S. soap operas but they have distinctive qualities. The run times for telenovelas are a fixed duration, with episodes shown five to six days a week and an average of 120 episodes per telenovela.

Third World

Originally used to distinguish nations that were aligned with neither the West nor the East during the Cold War. Commonly used to describe underdeveloped countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. These nations and the people there are often cast as being uncivilized or primitive. Avoid using term because of its negative connotations. Better to say developing countries. Use in quotes only if necessary.

totem

A representation of a person or likeness such as an animal or plant that is revered by a tribe or group. It is a part of many American Indian and African religious practices.

transgender

Refers to individuals whose gender identity and/or expression may not match their physical, sexual characteristics or sex assigned at birth. Some female and male cross-dressers, drag queens or kings, female or male impersonators, and intersex individuals may also identify as transgender. Use the name and personal pronouns that are consistent with how the individual lives publicly. When possible, ask which term the source prefers. Do not use transgendered. Offensive when used as a noun; use transgender people, transgender man, or transgender

woman. In cases where space is an issue, such as headlines, using trans as a shorthand adjectival form is acceptable. Transgender people may use a number of terms to describe themselves. For more guidance on transgender terminology and coverage, visit the NLGJA Journalists Toolbox article at www.nlgja.org/toolbox/transgender and the [GLAAD Media Reference Guide on Transgender Issues](#).

Transnational

Going beyond national boundaries or interests.

transracial

Across or crossing racial boundaries. The term is most often used in adoption to describe families where a child is adopted by parents of a different race. In 2015, the term was used to describe Rachel Dolezal, a NAACP chapter president who made international news when she was outed as a white woman who identified herself as black.

transsexual

Avoid this outdated term in favor of *transgender* and *transgender people* unless a person or community prefers the term; it can carry misleading medical connotations.

tribal council

The governing body of a tribe is usually referred to as the tribal council, and is elected by adult members of the tribe. Heading the council is one elected chairperson, president, chief, or governor who is the recognized leader. The council performs legislative aspects of tribal government.

tribal warfare

Avoid. Eurocentric term for ethnic conflict among people of color. Example: The conflict between Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda was called tribal warfare, but the civil war in the former Yugoslavia between Serbs, Croats, and Muslims was “ethnic cleansing.” Both are ethnic conflicts or civil wars.

tribe

Avoid. Use nation or ethnic group except for specific entities like a tribal council on a reservation. Within the United States, many Native Americans prefer the term *nation* because their people have signed treaties with the United States that recognize them as nations. Some Native Americans prefer their national affiliation instead of using the generic term *Native American*, e.g., Navajo, Hopi, Cherokee. In Africa, avoid referring to different ethnic groups



as tribes. Hutu and Tutsi are ethnic groups, just like Serbs, Croats, and Muslims in the former Yugoslavia. A federally recognized tribe is an American Indian or Alaska Native tribal entity that is recognized as having a government-to-government relationship with the United States, with the responsibilities, powers, limitations, and obligations attached to that designation, according to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In 2018 there were 573 federally recognized tribes.

turban

A head covering in desert or other hot climates that does not necessarily have ethnic or religious significance and is not solely Arab. People wear turbans for different reasons, and there are different types of turbans. Sikh men wear turbans that peak at the forehead to take care of their hair, which they do not cut, and to promote equality among themselves and to declare their identity. Turbans make Sikhs distinctive in India, where they are a minority. In the United States, Sikhs have been attacked by people who assumed the turbans meant they were Muslims. Most Muslims do not wear turbans, though their religious officials, clergy, or

W

leaders may wear them. They are typically spherical or conical. The shape of turbans varies by country.

undocumented immigrant

Preferred term to illegal alien, illegal immigrant, or illegal(s). This term describes the immigration status of people who do not have the federal documentation to show they are legally entitled to work, visit, or live here. Some Latinos say this term more accurately describes people who are in the United States illegally because the word points out that they are undocumented, but does not dehumanize them in the manner that such terms as aliens and illegals do.

undocumented worker

Preferred term to *illegal alien*, *illegal immigrant*, or *illegal(s)*. This term describes the immigration status of people who do not have the federal documentation to show they are legally entitled to work, visit, or live here.

West Indies

A group of islands in the Caribbean Sea that includes the Bahamas, Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, United States Virgin Islands, the Leeward Islands and Windward Islands, Guyana, Suriname, Trinidad, and Tobago. They acquired that name because Spanish explorers erroneously thought they had sailed to India.

White privilege

Advantages for people with white skin. This includes advantages they might not even know about. It can be a product of systemic racism. Advantages can be economic, social, or educational. One kind of privilege is freedom from barriers, suspicions, or expectations that non-white people experience daily. Another can be freedom from judgment or denial surrounding success or aspirations. For example, if two people acquire the same job or car, the white person's success might be taken for granted while the black person is asked how he or she managed it.

White, U.S. Census definition of

The U.S. Census Bureau, which adheres to the 1997 Office of Management and Budget standards on race and ethnicity, defines *white* as “a person having origins in any of the original

Y

peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.” The Census Bureau notes: “The racial categories included in the census questionnaire generally reflect a social definition of race recognized in this country and not an attempt to define race biologically, anthropologically, or genetically. In addition, it is recognized that the categories of the race item include racial and national origin or sociocultural groups.”

White, white

People in the United States who share a lineage that can be traced directly or indirectly to Europe.

worship, worshipped, worshipper

Worship is the act of offering devotion and praise to a deity or deities. It is most often used in reference to formal religious services, but also applies to private prayer and other acts done to honor or revere the sacred. Many evangelical Protestants have a tendency to use it specifically in reference to music—especially contemporary praise music—sung in church. Thus, the leader of the contemporary singing group may appear in the church bulletin as “praise and worship leader.”

yellow peril

Avoid, a slur. An imagined invasion of the United States at the beginning of the 20th century by Asian “hordes,” specifically Japanese, who had become successful entrepreneurs in California agriculture. Led to racist pulp fiction.

Yonsei, yonsei

Term for fourth-generation Japanese Americans, originating from the Japanese language term for “fourth generation.” In the American context, the term is understood to refer to the great-grandchildren of Japanese immigrants who arrived prior to the cessation of Japanese immigration to the United States under the dictates of the Immigration Act of 1924.