A Progressive's Style Guide

Hanna Thomas (SumOfUs.org)

Anna Hirsch (ActivistEditor.com)

Introduction

Toward Harnessing Language in Support of Intersectionality and Cross-sector Power Building

Language is a key ingredient[1] in a winning theory of change. Language can build bridges[2] and change minds. By acknowledging the ability of language to shape and reflect reality[3], progressive campaigns can become more powerful vehicles for social change, inclusion, and justice. In fact, understanding and applying the authentic language of the individuals and communities with whom we work can be a revolutionary act in itself.

Historically, extensive, issue-based language guidelines have remained siloed or proprietary. Some information has trickled up (with some questionable success[4]) to be centralized in the establishment grammar and usage style guides (APA[5], AP[6], CMS[7]), but this information is far from comprehensive and lacks the voice of the groups being discussed. At the same time, transparent conversations about the power of word choice and phrasing have remained disconnected and difficult to access.

In 2015, SumOfUs staff, led by Hanna Thomas, began the compilation of a new kind of guide – one that sparks a conversation about language among progressives. With the help of Anna Hirsch, an independent editor, *A Progressive's Style Guide* was born. We invite drivers of progressive change – community members, grassroots leaders, activists, and progressive funders – to peruse the vital movement frameworks, decolonizing usage, and up-to-date word choice and phrasing for current theory of change directions and momentum across groups and issue areas presented in this guide.

A Progressive's Style Guide is explicitly multi-voiced and is created with the following commitments. 1) We combat discriminatory language. 2) We seek advice or more information when we're unsure. 3) When writing, speaking, or using images, we aim to use examples that reflect a broad range of identities and perspectives.

We understand that there may be negative blowback to this work and that we won't be the first[8] to experience it. We affirm that we are aligned with free speech[9], and at the same time are promoting thoughtfulness and openness about how language is and isn't used[10], has been used[11], and could be used[12] for people and for our planet collectively. Because language is dynamic, changes with our struggles, and is shaped by criticism and the collective construction of social justice, we are compelled to keep building a collective language that liberates us all. As we continue to think about ways to organize this information that are accessible, user-friendly, clear, and aligned with progressives' beliefs and strategies, we know that in some instances we still fall short – and so, we also invite feedback. We are committed to this work and to remaining in dialogue.

Many thanks for your help and solidarity!

Central Principles

People-First language

People-first language aims to make personhood the essential characteristic of every person. People-first language views other descriptive social identities that people may hold as secondary and non-essential. Strict adherence to people-first language can lead to awkward sentence construction and may not align with reclamations of social identities, but we maintain that attuning to our shared humanity by telling stories that center people first, rather than exploiting identities, should be an aim of progressive writing.

Self-Identification

Wherever categorization and labels are used to oppress groups of people, self-identification becomes an act of resistance. At the same time, people who are robbed of opportunities to self-identify lose not just words that carry political power, but may also lose aspects of their culture, agency, and spirit. Progressive writing, as much as possible, should strive to include language that reflects peoples' choice and style in how they talk about themselves. If you aren't sure, ask.

Active Voice

A grammatical voice in many languages, active voice puts the "actor" of the sentence in the role of performing the action. Often lauded for contributing to more dynamic writing, active voice may also be key to naming perpetrators of violence and harm directly. An opportunity to scan for active voice should be taken as an opportunity to root out implicit bias toward status quo systems of power by naming the actors of oppression, whether human, institutional, or cultural.

Proper Nouns

Names used for and by individual places, persons, and organizations convey respect, understanding, acceptance, and clarity. At the same time, common nouns and pronouns can dilute an issue or simply create confusion. While conversational tone is often well utilized in campaign writing, great care should be taken to avoid misleading readers. For example, overuse of words such as "it," "that," and "this" may leave the reader wondering who the writer is talking about at a critical point in the story.

Age Ⓐ

Sum Of + Us

📑 Resources

- Adam Fletcher, <u>Discrimination Against Youth Voice</u>[13], The FreeChild Project, 2008.
- Adam Fletcher, <u>Glossary</u>[14]
- healthPROelderly, <u>Evidence-based Guidelines on Health Promotion for Older People: Social Determinants, Inequality and Sustainability, Glossary</u>[15].
- Marianne Falconer, <u>Out with "the old," elderly, and aged</u>[16], 2007.

✎ Writing Guidelines

Anti-adultism framework

Adultism is a system of beliefs, attitudes, and actions – fueled by institutional power – so pervasive that nearly everyone experiences this form of oppression. Children's rights movements early on centered around reforming unhealthy and destructive child labor practices, but have come to encompass all forms of oppression that devalue and dehumanize young people. To include young people in society it is vital to use language that views youth as contributors, that does not denigrate youth experiences, and that does not dismiss their ideas. It is appropriate to consider developmental stages, but do not use a lack of knowledge about human development to avoid involving young people. Perhaps the greatest injustice young people face is being silenced, overlooked, and left out of progressive social justice work all together.

"In 350 BCE, Aristotle stated that **children were the property of their father** because he had produced them, not unlike a tooth or a hair. Millennia later, adultism is one of the stealthiest players in modern society, built into the foundations of family, community, culture, and government . . . Adultist microaggressions are so broadly accepted as normal that I can easily recall 1) being enraged as a youth hearing them; but 2) *repeating them as an adult without thinking twice*."

💬 Kel Kray, <u>Everyday Adultism</u>[17], **Everyday Feminism Magazine**

Anti-ageism framework

Ageism is a system of beliefs, attitudes, and actions, fueled by institutional power, that oppresses all people at all ages, but is <u>considered most detrimental for the physical health of our oldest citizens</u>[18]. Ageists view a person's age number or chronological age as a marker of essential characteristics or type, leading to stereotyping and suppressing the experience and true nature of individuals. To ensure that people of all ages have a voice in society it is vital to reject a purely "age-number" framing of life stage, to always use medical terminology accurately, and to use narratives that support people of all ages building power.

"Myth #5 'People over 65 have diseases and disorders that limits their freedom to do what they want.' Uh-uh. **In fact, a lot of oldsters are in better shape than their grandkids.** 'My grandfather is 67, and he's a personal trainer at a well-known fitness center,' Fields says. (Note to selves: personal trainer could be a trending second-act career.)"

▦ [7 Myths About Old People](#)[19], Senior Planet

⊕ **Specific Recommendations**

· Most times there is no need to refer to a person's age. When the need arises, list the specific age number, rather than assigning a category that may be vague and create negative connotations.

· Whenever possible, ask the preferred terminology. One person may prefer "senior," while another person with the same age number may prefer "older adult."

· Avoid using age-related terminology to describe a situation metaphorically, especially if the phrasing is meant as an insult[20] or is used flippantly.

· Do not use language that patronizes, sentimentalizes, distorts, or ignores people based on their age number.

· Avoid negative, value-laden terms that overextend the limitations of a young person's developmental stage or the severity of an older person's health.

· Do not assume that someone who is older is living with a disability.

Y Terms used by anti–adultism and anti-ageism activists	**?** Terms avoided/questioned by anti-adultism and anti-ageism activists
• adolescent[21] (if describing the developmental stage of adolescence: "adolescent young people") • age apartheid[22] • ageing • elder abuse[23] • elderly person • older person[24] • people over . . . • people under . . . • senior • student (if context-appropriate) • teen/teenager/preteen • transitional age youth[25] (legal definition in U.S.) • young person • youth	• ancient • antiquated • childish • cougar • dated • emerging adult[26] • fossil • geezer • geriatric (unless in the phrase "geriatric medicine" or similar instances) • immature • infirm • medieval • middle-aged[27] • old lady/man • over the hill • senile (unless talking about the specific medical condition of senility) • the aged • the elderly[28] • the old

Disability ⒟

📑 Resources

- National Center on Disability and Journalism, Disability Language Style Guide[29].
- Research and Training Center on Independent Living, *Guidelines for reporting and writing about people with disabilities (7th Edition)*[30], University of Kansas, 2008.

✎ Writing Guidelines

Anti-ableism framework

Structural ableism assumes that there is an ideal body and mind that is better than all others, and ableists build a world in which this ideal can thrive and others cannot. The disability and mental, behavioral, and emotional health rights movements have fought to demonstrate that the opposite is true – that all bodies have value, that all people should be treated with dignity and respect, and that we can build a world that is beneficial to us all. In a world built to shut people with physical, mental, and emotional disabilities out, it is therefore paramount to use people-first language, to reject a purely "medical" framing of disability, to always use disability and mental health terminology accurately, and to use narratives that support people with disabilities in building power, in part by understanding that disability and mental health discrimination is not just interpersonal, but also institutional and cultural.

⊕ Specific Recommendations

- Most times there is no need to refer to a person's disability, but when the need arises, choose acceptable terminology for the specific disability or use the term preferred by the individual.

- Whenever possible, ask the preferred terminology. One person with a visual disability may prefer "blind," while another person with a similar disability may prefer "person with low or limited loss of vision."

- Avoid using disability and mental/emotional health terminology to describe a situation metaphorically, especially if the phrasing is meant as an insult or is used flippantly.

- Do not use language that villainizes, sentimentalizes, or heroizes people with disabilities.

- Avoid stereotyping phrasing that equates "thin" or "able-bodied" with health.

- Avoid negative or value-laden terms that overextend the severity of a disability.

- Remember that many chronic conditions and disabilities are invisible. Do not assume that because you do not know that someone is living with a disability that they are not.

"The **medical model of disability views disability as a 'problem'** that belongs to the disabled individual. It is not seen as an issue to concern anyone other than the individual affected. For example, if a wheelchair using student is unable to get into a building because of some steps, the medical model would suggest that this is because of the wheelchair, rather than the steps."

💬 University of Leicester[31]

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Terms used by disability rights activists

- cognitive disability
- deaf
- Deaf culture
- disability[32]
- disabled person
- emotional disability
- fat-shaming[33]
- hard of hearing
- learning disability
- limited vision, low vision, partially-sighted
- neuroatypical
- neurodivergent
- non-disabled, nondisabled
- non-visible disability
- on the autism spectrum

- partial hearing loss, partially deaf
- people without disabilities
- person who has . . . (schizophrenia, etc.)
- person who is . . . (blind, etc.)
- person with . . . (muscular dystrophy, etc.)
- physical disability
- PWDs (people with disabilities)
- substance use[34]
- uses a wheelchair

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Terms avoided/questioned by disability rights activists

- a mute
- ability[35]
- able-bodied
- addict[36]
- afflicted by
- alcoholic
- closed ears
- crazy
- crippled by
- deaf ears
- dialogue of the deaf[37]
- differently abled
- disAbled, (dis)abled, dis/abled
- divyang[38]
- dumb
- dwarf, midget, vertically challenged

- handi-capable
- handicapped
- hearing-impaired
- idiot
- invalid
- lame (never use to refer to a person)
- loony
- maniac
- mentally handicapped
- mongoloid
- nut, nut job, nutter, nutso
- patient
- psycho
- retarded
- schizo
- schizophrenic (never use to mean "of two minds")

- slow
- speech-impaired
- suffering from . . .
- temporarily able-bodied[39]
- the blind
- the deaf
- the disabled
- victim of . . .
- vision-impaired
- wheelchair-bound[40], confined to a wheelchair, in a wheelchair

Economy Ⓔ

✎ **Writing Guidelines**

Anti-classist framework

Classism is a system of beliefs, attitudes, and actions – fueled by institutional power – that advantages and strengthens the dominant class groups through differential treatment and the assignment of worth and ability based on economic status or perceived social class. Economic justice activists have long advocated that class underpins many other social injustices and that classism is already deeply ingrained in the primacy of a few language systems – including English – over the rest. Not assuming that a document will be produced in only one language may already be anti-classist act. At the same time, because everyone deserves the opportunity to build a material foundation toward dignity, productivity, and creativity, we should assume that all people have hopes and dreams not determined by their assigned social class. As such, wherever possible use language that avoids replicating class stereotypes,

that is conscious of how we over-rely on capitalist metaphors[45] to describe human stories[46] and stories about nature[47], and that embraces the words and names of the people whose causes we are supporting. At the same time, holding an equity stance, as well as a pro-labor stance, can also help combat corporate power and bring consumers, workers, and shareholders onto the same page.

⊕ **Specific Recommendations**

- Include titles, credentials, and positions held only when they are germane to the story.

- If someone's social circumstances are relevant to the story, be specific: *"Homeowners at risk of foreclosure."*

- While people who work in the home may not have a contractual employer, rather than equating employment with work and saying "they don't work," reference the work they contribute in the home.

- Understand the difference between historically legal terms, such as "minimum wage[48]" or "basic wage[49]," and descriptive, advocacy terms, such as "living wage[50]" and "fair wage[51]," and also how usage can change[52].

- Understand the difference between[53] "income inequality," "pay inequality," and "wealth inequality," and be precise.

> **"The range of problems raised by diversity of languages in international economic and political integration processes calls upon innovative, efficient and fair language policies to manage multilingualism.** Language policies are increasingly acknowledged as being a necessary component of many decisions taken in the areas of labour mobility, access to knowledge and higher education, social inclusion of migrants, and they can affect companies' international competitiveness and the democratic control of international organisations."

💬 Economics, Linguistic Justice, and Language Policy Symposium[54]

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Terms used by economic justice activists

- caste apartheid[55]
- economic opportunity
- equity
- financial stability
- giving families the tools they need
- global stratification[56]
- low-income (as an adjective)
- people experiencing material poverty
- persons experiencing homelessness or illness
- racial equity[57]
- strengthening families

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Terms avoided/ questioned by economic justice activists

- at-risk[58]
- basic[59]
- classy[60]
- culture of poverty[61]
- disadvantaged
- economic mobility[62]
- financial security[63]
- giving families the resources they need[64]
- in need, the needy[65]
- lazy
- less fortunate
- professionalism[66]
- supporting families[67]
- the poor
- unskilled labor[68]
- work ethic

Environment/Science E/S

📄 Resources

- David Roberts, How to write about climate: Pull up a barstool[69], Grist.org, 2013.
- Greenpeace, Glossary[70], 2014.
- Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, Glossary of Environmental Terms[71].
- United Nations Environment Programme, Glossary of terms[72]

✎ Writing Guidelines

Sustainability, data-driven framework

The belief that we are responsible for the long-term and immediate health of the planet has been gaining widespread acceptance over the past several decades – but creating and implementing smart policy that meets the requirements for sustainable human growth and life and that is simultaneously data-driven has continued to be a huge challenge in direct proportion to the intense and dominating anti-environment and anti-science narratives in the news and other media. We need to be explicit about how language in particular continues to bog down environmental justice movement work and to do an even better job at empathically and empirically telling the true story of what we already know about the wellbeing of our shared planet.

"Environmental justice terminology can push sustainability studies to examine more detailed data rather than average characteristics of present populations and future possibilities. Thus, environmental justice's emphasis on the present may help raise support for sustainability initiatives, especially among people focused on daily quality of life."

💬 Sarah E. Fredericks, Measuring and Evaluating Sustainability: Ethics in Sustainability Indexes. Climate Outreach and Information Network[73]

⊕ Specific Recommendations

- Know the science and be precise with terminology.

- Know the audience and consider using language that will bring that audience along.

- Understand that "climate change" and "global warming" have been in the public domain for a long time and it may be hard to avoid using these terms.

- As needed, reframe the discussion in terms of direct impacts on people's lives, livelihoods, and communities.

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Terms used by environmental justice activists

- alternative energy
- biodiversity
- carbon footprint[74]
- climate action
- climate action plan[75]
- climate change
- climate change denier/skeptic[76]
- climate chaos
- climate instability
- climate weird-ing
- global warming
- greenhouse effect
- greenhouse gas
- innovation
- our deteriorating atmosphere
- permaculture[77]
- pseudoscience[78]

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Terms avoided/questioned by environmental justice activists

- climate change doubter[79]
- climate refugee[80]
- eco-fascist, eco-nazi, eco-terrorist
- greenie[81]
- tree hugger, tree hugging[82]

Food (F)

📰 Resources

- Growing Food & Justice for All Initiative, Glossary[83], 2015.
- Oakland Food Policy Council, Glossary of Terms[84], 2015.
- Smita Narula, How to Talk About Food And Why It Matters[85], 8 April 2015.
- World Food Programme, Hunger Glossary[86], 2016.
- World Health Organization, Food Security[87], 2016.

✎ Writing Guidelines

Food sovereignty and access framework

Food justice activists understand that today's food systems are fraught with inequities, from hazardous, low-pay conditions for farmers, to a predominance of fast food in many schools and neighborhoods, especially in areas with less wealth. Because of this, they seek to create more equity in our food systems, but also to change how we view food and our disconnection from food culturally. Language that makes ownership and consumption tangible, that foregrounds the basic right to quality food, and that clearly connects food injustice to other confounding issues, such as race and class, are necessary to positively change today's food systems.

⊕ Specific Recommendations

- While much of the language around food is not pejorative, it is important to consider terms carefully for their historical, scientific, and political meanings before using them. Words like hunger and famine are sometimes used casually with potentially mixed or even damaging effect.

- Focus on the stories of local people and people trying to gain, regain, and retain sovereignty and access to food. There is often an opportunity to tell the stories of people, and we can do a better job of not missing them or letting our focus stay elsewhere on abstractions or concepts.

- Use language that is accurate ("SNAP," not "food stamps[88]," in the U.S.), but don't miss opportunities to also be descriptive ("safety net program[89]") of the reality.

"The term **food sovereignty** was first coined by members of Via Campesina in 1996 to refer to a policy framework advocated by a number of farmers, peasants, pastoralists, fisherfolk, Indigenous Peoples, women, rural youth and environmental organizations, namely **the claimed 'right of peoples to define their own food, agriculture, livestock and fisheries systems,' in contrast to having food largely subject to international market forces.**"

📖 India, Food sovereignty in Manipur,[90] La Via Campesina

(Y) Terms used by food justice activists

- a malnourished person[91]
- an undernourished person
- daily undernourishment
- day laborer[92]
- farm to table
- farmer
- food poverty[93]
- food security[94]
- food insecurity
- food and nutrition security[95]
- food sovereignty[96]
- hunger [97]
- safety net program
- seed to table
- slow food[98]
- starvation
- worker welfare[99]

(?) Terms avoided/questioned by food justice activists

- famine[100]
- food desert[101]
- food stamps
- natural[102] (labeling on food)
- the hungry

Sum Of + Us

Gender/Sex G/S

📑 Resources

- Barnaby B. Barratt, Why Sexual Freedom is a Fundamental Human Right[103], 2010.
- Claire Ainsworth, Sex Redefined: The Idea of Two Sexes is Simplistic. Biologists Now Think There Is a Wider Spectrum Than That[104], 18 February 2015.
- Debby Herbenick, PhD, and Aleta Baldwin, What Each of Facebook's 51 New Gender Options Means[105], 15 February 2014.
- Full Marriage Equality, Glossary[106].
- GLAAD Media Reference Guide – Transgender Issues[107], 2016.
- It's Pronounced Metrosexual, Comprehensive* List of LGBTQ+ Term Definitions[108], 2013.
- Multiamory, Poly Glossary[109].
- Not Your Mother's Playground, Sexuality Glossary[110].
- Suzannah Weiss, 5 Ways that Science Supports Feminism – Not Gender Essentialism[111], 25 August 2015.

✎ Writing Guidelines

Feminist framework

Along with the important work of combatting sexism – a system of beliefs, attitudes, and actions, fueled by institutional power, that targets people based on supposed naturalistic categories of biological sex – feminism has simultaneously unearthed myriad new understandings of human experience, including a range of gender identities and expressions; multiple axes of physical, emotional, and spiritual attraction; an alphabet of sexual orientations; and virulent, grassroots demand for sexual freedom. In response, feminists have generated considerable content to answer the question of how we should speak and write in these new contexts – but a few basic approaches can help right away. First, self-identifying is crucial, so whenever possible use language that is preferred by the people being talked about. Second, assume complexity and uniqueness and strive to represent people's complete lives instead of reducing people to aspects of who they are, a practice that is often sparked by stigma and shame. Finally, use language that avoids replicating gender stereotypes, that resists the hegemony of binaries and strict categories, and that embraces and uplifts human experience over science, law, or cultural norms.

"A Nelson queer youth activist says they finally feel visible after Statistics New Zealand has announced a new gender category. **'Gender diverse' will join 'male' and 'female' categories in a new gender-identity classification** released on Friday by Statistics New Zealand. This new classification records the identity of all people, including those who see themselves as different from male or female, and will form an integral part of the Statistical Standard for Gender Identity, to be used by government organisations."

🖹 Stacey Knott, New diverse gender category 'affirming' for local activist[112]

⊕ Specific Recommendations

- Despite their being problematic, be aware that binary gender and sex terms are still important descriptors in anti-sexism work.

- Biologists may now be striving to describe physiological sex as non-binary, but society is still largely unaware of this trend and may need ongoing reminders.

- There are more than two genders, and it is always ok to note this.

- There are also more than two sexes, and it is always ok to note this.

- They[113] is a good alternative[114] if you aren't sure of the person's pronoun.

- Always use a transgender person's chosen name. It is never appropriate to put quotation marks around either a transgender person's chosen name or the pronoun that reflects that person's gender identity. It is usually best to report on transgender people's stories from the present day instead of narrating them from some point or multiple points in the past.

- Be wary of scientific nomenclature, which is also influenced by culture and often perpetuates stereotyped thinking. At the same time, scientific studies can also be baked with prejudice at a structural level, and so even a study written according to inclusive guidelines can still reproduce biased language and biased frames.

- Be wary of language that suggests "innateness" of characteristics, especially language that pulls for essentialism of gender or sex.

- Be aware that using language that is motivated by trying to make others "fit in" can backfire, leaving folks feeling like they have to conform.

- Do not repeat fear stories related to sex that promotes a culture of stigma.

- If a gender-neutral term is available and does not change the meaning, consider using it. Often this means just pluralizing the antecedent to avoid use of singular pronouns: "Employees should read their packets carefully," not "Each employee should read his packet carefully."; "Invite your spouse or partner," not "Invite your boyfriend or husband."

- Generally, it is not necessary to specify the gender of a person in a particular role, as most occupations are not gender defined. Avoid terms that show gender biases in the profession: cleaner, police officer, chair, not cleaning lady, policeman, chairman. Adding "male" before "nurse" or "lady" before "doctor" is almost always unnecessary.

- Use parallel terms or terms of equal status and avoid terms that denote gender inferiority: "husband and wife, staff in the office," not "man and wife, girls in the office."

- Do not gratuitously describe a woman as a "mother of three." Family details and marital status are only relevant in stories about families or marriage.

- When reporting on women and men who work in the sex industry, identify them as individuals first, not by the way they earn money.

- Do not assume heterosexual orientation. Where appropriate, use examples of same-sex partners and families, and LGBQQTIA2-S (lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, questioning, transgender, intersex, asexual, two-spirit) people's lives and experiences.

- Avoid defaulting to umbrella terms like gay or homosexual. Use LGBTQ to refer to a broad community or be specific when relevant: lesbian, gay man, bisexual woman, etc.

- Be mindful of appropriate and respectful in-group versus out-group naming. Queer is an acceptable in-group term but it is often better to refer to queer communities rather than calling an individual queer unless they have already told you this is how they identify.

- When referring to the broader community, queer (as in queer people) or LGBTQ (as in LGBTQ people) is appropriate – gay, however, is not. LGBTQ is only appropriate when referring to the broader community or groups of people, not when referring to individuals.

- Same-sex marriage is shorthand that should be used only when needed for clarity or for space purposes (such as, in headlines). Generally, in text, it is more accurate to refer to "same-sex couples' marriage rights" or something similar.

- Don't use slut-shaming language; note that slut is not automatically a negative word.

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Terms used by sex and gender identity justice activists

- a transgender person
- agender[115]
- bigender
- crossdresser (if this is how the person self-identifies, but not as a catchall[116])
- gay[117]
- Gender Affirmation Sex Reassignment Surgery, gender confirmation surgery
- genderfluid[118]
- genderfuck[119]
- genderless
- genderqueer[120]
- gray-A[121]
- hen[122]
- hijra[123]
- humankind, humanity
- intersex[124]
- kathoey[125]
- muxe[126]

- Mx.[127]
- non-binary
- non-cisgender[128], cisgender[129]
- non-discrimination law, ordinance
- non-gendered
- sex work[130]
- sex worker[131]
- sexual orientation
- slut, slut-shaming[132] (if this is how a person or group self-identifies)
- they, them, their[133]
- third gender[134]
- trans woman, trans man
- transgender (adj.)[135]
- transgender people
- transition, transitioning
- two-spirit

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Terms avoided/questioned by sex and gender identity justice activists

- bathroom bill
- be a man, man up[136]
- berdache[137]
- feminazi[138]
- Gender Identity Disorder (GID) (offensive because it labels people as "disordered")
- gender-bender[139]
- he-she
- hermaphrodite
- homosexual
- it
- lifestyle choice
- mankind
- non-straight[140]
- pre-operative, post-operative
- prostitute[141], whore[142]
- sex change, sex change operation

- sexual preference[143], sexual preference[144]
- she-male, shemale[145]
- shim
- trannie, tranny
- trans*[146]
- a transgender
- transgender (noun)
- transgendered (adj.)[147]
- transgenders
- transsexual[148], transexual (unless this is how the person self-identifies)
- transvestite (unless this is how the person self-identifies)
- walk of shame[149]

Geopolitics G

📖 **Resources**

- Jack David Eller, Student resources: Glossary[150], Cultural Anthropology: Global Forces, Local Lives, 2009.
- Transnational Institute, Mission: Values[151], 2015.

✎ **Writing Guidelines**

Global community framework

Mutuality and respect, as well as curiosity and cultural exchange, are the hallmarks of a vibrant global community in this framework. Language that seeks to understand, share goodwill, and fight global injustice will be from the perspective of local people with thoughtfulness about transnational networks fighting international, interconnected issues that harm people broadly.

⊕ **Specific Recommendations**

- Style for foreign placenames evolves with common usage. Leghorn has become Livorno, and maybe one day München will supplant Munich, but not yet. Many names have become part of the English language: Geneva is the English name for the city that Switzerland's French speakers refer to as Genève and its German speakers call Genf. Accordingly, opt for locally used names, with some main exceptions (this list is not exhaustive; apply common sense): Andalusia, Archangel, Basel, Berne, Brittany, Catalonia, Cologne, Dunkirk, Florence, Fribourg, Genoa, Gothenburg, Hanover, Kiev, Lombardy, Milan, Munich, Naples, Normandy, Nuremberg, Padua, Piedmont, Rome, Sardinia, Seville, Sicily, Syracuse, Turin, Tuscany, Venice, Zurich.

- But bear in mind that Colonel Gaddafi renamed Libya "The Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriyya" and so there are some exceptions that should not follow the previous guideline.

"Like many things, 'first world problems' has a different force depending on whether you are applying it to yourself or throwing it in someone else's face. If, at the end of an irate tirade about how my Kenyan coffee beans were over-roasted by the artisanal *torréfacteur*, I append the phrase 'first world problem' with some wry rearrangement of my face muscles, I signal that I know this is just one of the minor frustrations of a very fortunate life. To pre-emptively concede that my problem is just a first world one is to ostentatiously check my privilege before anyone else tells me to do so. **At the same time, I remind myself and everyone in earshot that we are indeed living in the 'first world.' So it is also a humblebrag.**"

💬 Steven Poole, Why the phrase 'first world problem' is condescending to everyone,[152] The Guardian

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Terms used by global justice activists

- West Bank/separation/security barrier (when referred to in its totality; "fence" or "wall" may be ok when referring to specific segments)
- Palestinians, Palestine is best used for the occupied territories (the West Bank and Gaza); if referring to the whole area, including Israel, use "historic Palestine"
- fat country / lean country[153]
- global south / global north[154]

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Terms avoided/questioned by global justice activists

- Jerusalem should not be referred to as the capital of Israel; it is not recognised as such by the international community
- second world
- third world[155]
- war on terror[156]

Health 🅗

📑 Resources

- European Portal for Action on Health Inequalities, Glossary[157].
- International Planned Parenthood Federation, Glossary[158], 2013.
- Kawachi, I., Subramanian, S. V., & Almeida-Filho, N. (2002) A glossary for health inequalities[159], *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health* (56): pp. 647–652.
- Think Progress, The language of healthcare 2009: The 10 rules for stopping the 'Washington Takeover' of healthcare[160], 2009.
- World Health Organization, Health Impact Assessment (HIA): Glossary of terms used[161].

✎ Writing Guidelines

Human rights framework

The World Health Organization defines "the highest attainable standard of health" as a "fundamental right of every human being." This approach to health centers people and access, not status and cost, and demands a public discourse that speaks to the universal, interdependent, and personal experience of health and healthcare systems. Peoples first language, as well as language that supports dignity and a broad understanding of health factors – food, housing, a healthy environment, etc. – are needed. Because "vulnerable and marginalized groups in society tend to bear undue proportion of health problems" (and health injustices), careful attention should be paid to ensuring that all people have an active voice in how they define their own healthcare and health outcomes.

"Last week, I logged on to *The New York Times* to read its piece about right-wing women who are improbably eager for their party to get more aggressive in the battle against reproductive liberty and nearly spit out my seltzer.

The line that did me in was from Republican pollster Kellyanne Conway, quoted as urging conservative candidates to push back against Democrats who use the term "women's health" in reference to contraception or abortion. "Women's health issues," Conway averred, "are osteoporosis or breast cancer or seniors living alone who don't have enough money for health care."

I've gotten downright inured to Republican men making gaffes about "legitimate rape" and female bodies that have "ways to shut that whole thing down," but here was a Republican woman **blithely asserting that procedures like the one I had undergone just that morning – in which a doctor pushed a very long needle through my abdominal muscles, into my uterus, and into the amniotic sac surrounding the future kid I hope to carry to term – did not qualify as part of "women's health."**

📑 Don't Let Republicans Erase Vaginas from Women's Health[162]

⊕ Specific Recommendations

- Consider whether terms and phrasing are crass, inaccurate, or may reinforce stigma, implying helplessness or inviting pity (AIDS victim) and take the time to re-word or frame the issue with adequate context to go against those patterns.

- Keep in mind that the medical, pharmaceutical, and insurance industries are biased and that bias from professionals and organizations in these fields impact the language of institutionally defined "health outcomes." Careful consideration of these biases can be supported by even minimal consultation with people who actually experience a given health issue.

- Avoid stereotyping phrasing that equates "thin" or "able-bodied" with health.

Y	**?**
Terms used by health care rights activists	**Terms avoided/questioned by health care rights activists**
• abortion rights advocate	• AIDS victim
• AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome)	• full-blown AIDS
• anti-abortion	• pro-choice[163]
• people living with AIDS	• pro-life
• people with AIDS	• suffering from AIDS
• pro-abortion rights	
• pro-voice	

Housing/Space H/S

📄 Resources

- Here to Help, Housing glossary[164], 2007.
- Housing Development Consortium, Glossary[15].
- Institute of Global Homelessness, A global framework for understanding homelessness[166], September 2015.
- National Economic & Social Rights Institute, What is the human right to housing?[167]
- Susie Cagle, Homes for the homeless[168], *Aeon Magazine*, 28 August 2015.

✎ Writing Guidelines

Human rights framework

The United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* defines housing as part of "the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing of himself and his family." This approach centers people and access, not status and cost, and demands a public discourse that speaks to the universal, interdependent, and personal experience of housing. People-first language, as well as language that supports dignity and a broad understanding of housing and spatial injustice – housing discrimination, unaffordability, foreclosure and eviction, homelessness, etc. – are needed. Careful attention should be paid to ensuring that all people have an active voice in how they define their own housing situation.

⊕ Specific Recommendations

- Consider whether terms and phrasing are crass, inaccurate, or may reinforce stigma, implying criminalization or invoking fear (bum, indigent, vagrant, beggar) and take the time to re-word or frame the issue with adequate context to go against those patterns.

- Avoid stereotyping phrasing that equates "sin" or "sickness" with homelessness, and at the same time, don't shy away from language around mental or physical health if it is germane to a story about housing.

"San Francisco represents a particularly important case of the *criminalization of homelessness.* **Even in liberal San Francisco, the social construction of homelessness as bad behavior became powerful enough to propel large-scale police campaigns against nuisance offenses,** repeated attempts to abolish general assistance, and numerous other programs aimed at pushing the 'visible poor' back into invisibility."

📖 Teresa Gowan, Steering city's homeless focus from sin to sickness[169], San Francisco Public Press

Y Terms used by housing rights activists	? Terms avoided/questioned by housing rights activists
• favela[170]	• bum[175]
• ghetto (historical and current usages that illuminate injustices[171] or belong to one's identity[172])	• gentrification[176]
• green the ghetto[173]	• ghetto (as an adjective[177] or in the context of hipster racism[178])
• homeless person	• the homeless
• housing first	• transient
• slum (as self-definition[174])	
• workforce housing	

Immigration/Refugees I/R

📑 Resources

- Immigrant Justice Network, Common terms defined[179].
- Immigration Equality, Glossary of terms[180], 2015.
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Creating an inclusive society: Practical strategies to promote social integration[181], 2009.

✎ Writing Guidelines

Inclusive society framework

By definition state borders mark which people are in and which people are out. All too often, our current global system of nations enforces immigration and asylum laws based on those borders and an us-verses-them ethos when determining who will have access to civil rights. While immigration and refugee issues have been tied to civil rights in this way, there are compelling arguments[182] for why crossing a border should also be framed as a human rights issue. Not only are immigrants and refugees vulnerable to increased human rights abuses, additionally, the language of international human rights law may be a powerful tool for diagnosing such abuses. However, taking the immigration and refugee frame a step beyond, by aiming for an inclusive society[183] frame, may describe the antidote to state-driven mistreatment. Language that raises visibility of personal stories, creates empathy and recognizes diverse assets, promotes cross-cultural interactions, fights discrimination, and offers respect and an invitation to participate breaks down us-versus-them thinking and avoids succumbing to the quagmire of individual sovereignties' policy debates.

⊕ Specific Recommendations

- Avoid focusing on groups of immigrants or refugees in a way that misses the individuals that make up those groups.

- Presume innocence.

- By definition, a person is never illegal; an "illegal immigrant" makes as much a sense as saying an "illegal accountant," were they accused of tax fraud.

- An asylum seeker can become an undocumented immigrant only if he or she remains after having failed to respond to a removal notice.

- Young undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children are referred to as DREAMers (retaining capitalization of the DREAM Act).

- Use the word "immigrant" with great care, not only because it is often incorrectly used to describe people who were born in the reported country, but also because it has been used negatively for so many years.

"One of the first things any journalist learns is that when you're reporting on someone accused of a crime, you always use 'alleged' to indicate that the accused has not been convicted and could very well be innocent. Until a court pronounces guilt, it's the 'alleged' bank robber, the 'alleged' jaywalker and the 'alleged" candy-snatcher. And yet, whenever immigration issues make it into the news, journalists and media organizations regularly use the phrase 'illegal immigrant' or 'illegal alien' to describe undocumented immigrants, **skipping not just the trial but branding the person as criminality itself."**

💬 Gabriel Arana, CNN, NYT asked to drop 'illegal immigrant' ahead of debate,[184] The Huffington Post

Y	**?**
Terms used by immigrants rights activists	**Terms avoided/ questioned by immigrants rights activists**
• asylee	• alien[186]
• asylum seeker	• an illegal
• children of immigrants	• anchor baby[187]
• family	• ex-pat[188]
• foreign national	• failed asylum seeker
• person	• illegal alien
• person seeking citizenship	• illegal asylum seeker[189]
• person with citizenship in . . .	• illegal immigrant
• refugee	• legal alien
• refused asylum seeker	• legal citizen
• stateless person[185]	• legal resident
• undocumented immigrant	• legalized
	• migrant[190] (when used too casually to refer to refugees; however, migration has been effective in Favianna Rodriquez's art campaign[191])
	• natural, naturalized (except when used in the legal sense of U.S. immigration law)
	• resident alien
	• second-generation

Indigeneity/Ancestry I/A

📑 Resources

- Jeff Corntassel, Re-envisioning resurgence: Indigenous pathways to decolonization and sustainable self-determination[192], *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, Vol. 1, pp. 86–101, 2012.
- Reporting in Indigenous communities[193].
- SABAR (Strategic Alliance of Broadcasters for Aboriginal Reflection), Key terms.[194]
- United Nations, Global issues: Decolonization[195].

"Decolonization doesn't have a synonym; it is not a substitute for 'human rights' or 'social justice,' though undoubtedly they are connected in various ways. Decolonization demands an Indigenous framework and a centering of Indigenous land, Indigenous sovereignty, and Indigenous ways of thinking. Too often, decolonization becomes bastardized, sidelined, or simply misunderstood — in creating a space such as *Decolonization,* there is the chance to 'write back' against these trends, to engage and oppose colonialism, as well as to connect and support Indigeneity globally."

🗩 Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang,
　　Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor[196]

✎ Writing Guidelines

Decolonization and resurgence framework
To this day, centuries-old global colonization continues to destroy Indigenous homelands, cultures, and communities. Decolonization and resurgence movements, however, have demonstrated the power to create "everyday practices of renewal and responsibility" for Indigenous peoples, reclaiming personal and group histories, as well as opening the door to self-determined futures. Therefore, language that recognizes a history of pillage and violence by centering the experiences and stories of those whose families have been most affected by colonization for generations and supports all Indigenous peoples in building power is vital.

✦ Specific Recommendations

- "Indigenous" is internationally inclusive for all Indigenous peoples.

- Whenever possible, use a specific name (e.g., Cherokee and Inuit). If you are not aware of the preferred name, whenever possible, ask.

- Capitalize the proper names of tribes, nationalities, and peoples:
  - Full list of tribes and languages in USA[197]
  - Full list of tribes and languages in Canada[198]

- The term "Indian" is outdated and should be replaced by the term "First Nation" except in the following cases:

  – in direct quotations;

  – when citing titles of books, works of art, etc.;

  – in discussions of history where necessary for clarity and accuracy;

  – in discussions of some legal/constitutional matters requiring precision in terminology;

  – in discussions of rights and benefits provided on the basis of "Indian" status; and

  – in statistical information collected using these categories (e.g., the Census).

- The term "Eskimo" is outdated and has been replaced by "Inuit."

- Terms that distinguish "racial purity" come from a colonized and government-invented caste system. For example, the sort of blood quantum system apparent in South America and imposed by the Spanish Conquistadors, with terms like "Mestizo" from the *Casta system*, was used explicitly to separate people into classes.

- Avoid vocabulary and usage that carries hierarchical valuation, describes Indigenous peoples as "belonging" to Canada, the United States, or Australia, etc., and other usages that may denote inferiority. Use neutral terms instead. For example: "Indigenous peoples in Canada have traditions and cultures that go back thousands of years," not "Canada's Indigenous people have traditions and cultures that go back thousands of years." Similarly, do not say "Canadian First Nations" as Canada is the colonial power and many Indigenous people do not identify as Canadian.

- Expressions such as "myth," "folklore," "magic," "sorcery," and "superstition(s)" used in relation to Indigenous beliefs, as well as words that imply that all Indigenous creation and religious beliefs are less valid than other religious beliefs, should be avoided.

- "Aboriginal People" can be used to refer to more than one Aboriginal person. The use of "Aboriginal Peoples" is preferred as it emphasizes the diversity of people within the group known as Aboriginal people. "Native" is a word similar in meaning to "Aboriginal." It should always be given a capital "A" and never abbreviated.

- **In Australia**:

  – The linguistic portrayal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has been and remains mainly negative and stereotypical. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are most often described in racial group terms, for example as "blacks" or "Aborigines," and almost never as individuals with personal names. Some Indigenous people of Australia also object to being labeled "Aborigines" because it is a term that was imposed on them by the British, and because it is the general term for any Indigenous people. They prefer to be known by the terms they have developed for themselves – check the individual's land base and tribe first, and when in doubt, ask. Others, however, consider the noun "Aborigine(s)" to be acceptable, but not "Aboriginals." The use of "Aboriginal" as an adjective may be more widely accepted (e.g., the Aboriginal Education Unit, the Aboriginal people of Australia, Aboriginal employees/students).

  – The separate linguistic and cultural identity of the Indigenous people of the Torres Strait Islands must be recognized. The preferred term is Torres Strait Islander. Abbreviations such as "Islander" and "TSI" should not be used.

- **In Canada:**
  - "Aboriginal Peoples" refers to all the Aboriginal people collectively, without regard to their separate origins and identities (including Métis, First Nations, and Inuit). "Native Peoples" is a collective term to describe the descendants of the original peoples of North America. The term is increasingly outdated like Aboriginal (particularly when used as a noun) and is losing currency. The term "First Nation(s)" is widely used and has for the most part replaced the term "Indian." "First Nations People(s)" refers to all Indian peoples in Canada – both Status and Non-Status Indians. It excludes Métis and Inuit people. "First Nation" has also been adopted to replace the word "band" in some communities. First Nations Peoples come from different nations with different and separate languages, cultures, and customs and when possible should not be referred to as a homogenous group. Use someone's specific nation, community, or band. For band names, use the spelling the band prefers.

Y	**?**
Terms used by decolonization activists	**Terms avoided/questioned by decolonization activists**
• Aboriginal Peoples (in Australia) • First Nations (in Canada) • First Peoples • Indigenous (for global references) • Inuit (not Eskimo) • Inuk (singular of Inuit) • Native Americans (for the Americas) • Original Peoples	• Criollo • Eskimo[199] (use Inuit) • folklore (if used to describe a belief system as less valid) • full-blood • half-breed • half-caste • Indian (unless it is a quote or referring to an already established name) • Indio • magic (if used to describe a belief system as less valid) • Mestizo • Multo • myth (if used to describe a belief system as less valid) • Negro • Pardo • part-aboriginal • part-Indian • part-native • sorcery (if used to describe a belief system as less valid) • Squaw (unless it is a quote or referring to an already established name) • superstition(s) (if used to describe a belief system as less valid) • Zambo

Police/Incarceration P/I

📑 Resources

- Candace Smith, Restorative justice and transformative justice: Definitions and debates[200], 5 March 2013.
- Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform, Glossary[201].
- McGraw Hill, The police in American: Glossary[202], 2015.

"We received more than 200 responses to our callout asking the best way to refer to people behind bars. Of the options we offered, 38 percent preferred 'incarcerated person,' 23 percent liked 'prisoner' and nearly 10 percent supported use of the word inmate. Thirty percent selected 'other' ('person in prison,' 'man or woman,' 'the person's name.') Here is a sample of the responses (some of which have been edited for length or clarity)."

📖 Blair Hickman, Inmate. Prisoner. Other. Discussed. What to call Incarcerated People: Your feedback,[203] The Marshall Project

✎ Writing Guidelines

Restorative justice framework

Restorative justice, unlike retributive justice, holds as true that oppression underpins all other forms of harm, abuse, and assault. A restorative justice framework not only acknowledges individual experiences and identities of all people, it also offers a process and language for actively resisting institutional and political systems of criminal injustice. To apply a restorative justice frame, use language that supports accountability and healing, that promotes agency for survivors and transformation for people who harm, and that works to disassemble oppression at every level and in all forms. It is also important to keep in mind how we wield our own power and privilege when writing about police violence and state crime by paying attention to how we can foster liberation, shift power, accountability, safety, and collective action, and respect cultural difference.

✥ Specific Recommendations

- Use decriminalizing language.

- "Felons, not families" presents a false dichotomy.

- Under the veil of protecting national and public safety, "homeland security" rhetoric increasingly draws on the ideologies and practices, such as hyperpolicing and criminalization, of the decades-long War on Crime.

- Separate the act or crime from the person. Do not define people entirely based off their criminal act (or accused criminal act).

- In the United States, prisons are different than jails. Jails are where people are held awaiting trial and often run by the county. Prisons are often run by the state (or federal) and are where people are serving sentences after being convicted.

Y

Terms used by police, and incarceration reform activists

- formerly incarcerated person
- incarcerated person
- inmate
- jail
- justice involved individual
- parolee
- person in prison
- person with conviction
- prison
- prison officer
- prisoner
- returning citizen

?

Terms avoided/questioned by police, and incarceration reform activists

- correctional institution
- correctional officer
- ex-offender[204]
- guard
- offender[205]
- the formerly incarcerated
- the incarcerated

Race/Ethnicity R/E

📄 **Resources**

- America Healing, Racial equity resource guide: Glossary[206].
- Global Sociology, Glossary[207].
- NPR.org, Four lessons from the media's conflicted coverage of race[208], 6 December 2014.
- Racial Equity Tools, Racial equity tools glossary[209].
- Samantha, FAQ: Cultural appropriation[210].

✎ **Writing Guidelines**

Structural and cultural anti-racism framework
Racism, in order to be dismantled, must be uprooted at every level, from the foundations of institutions that dictate the practices and policies enacted by personnel to the attitudes and beliefs that we reinforce through repeated social interactions and deeply internalized messages. Reclaiming power from racist systems takes a willingness to come to the conversation with curiosity and openness and a willingness to get it wrong without letting that stop us from continuing to try to understand and do better. Language that suggests a capacity to step outside default roles to hear and support folks who have been hurt and limited by racism is needed. Stories and terms that are meaningful to folks in developing their identities and building power will change what is possible in fights to end racism, and will help win.

⊕ **Specific Recommendations**

- A main goal should be to tell stories from the perspective of the community being represented, rather than telling the story through the lens of the dominant power brokers. Centering the perspective of marginalized groups will often take getting educated on common underlying assumptions – actively seek out this information.

- Understand what race, racism, racial identity, ethnicity, ethnic oppression, and ethnic identity are.

- Avoid references that draw undue attention to ethnic backgrounds or racial identities. When references are valid, learn the most appropriate specific terminology or use the term preferred by the person or group concerned. Also, remember to mention the race or color of white people as well.

- Capitalize the proper names of ancestral, national, place, and religious identities: Indigenous Peoples, Arab, French-Canadian, Inuit, Jew, Latin, Asian, Cree, etc.

- Combining names of continents is a common way of identifying someone's ancestry: African American, Afro-Cuban, Eurasian. These should be capitalized. These are also sometimes used to indicate race[211], however there are problems with using these descriptors as analogues for racial identities. Describing a person who is black and lives in Canada as African American may create inaccuracies if they don't self-identify culturally as African, if they do self-identify as Canadian, or if they are white, born in Africa, and recently moved to Canada.

- Instead of saying "an African American" or "a black[212]" try "a black person" or "a person of color." At the same time, some groups will prefer the former terminology, and it will still be important to use language used by the people being represented.

- At the same time, note: "person of color" and "Black" are not synonymous. Also, "person of color" and "immigrant" are not synonymous.

- Black/White are sometimes capitalized and sometimes lowercase. Consider your audience; again, follow the lead of your constituencies; and set a consistent house style and follow it.

- Avoid vocabulary that extends negative racial, ethnic, or cultural connotations and avoid usage that carriers hierarchical valuation or portrays groups of people as inferior, bad, criminal, or less valued than others. At times, such language may be difficult to perceive from the point of view of an oppressor group. Don't assume you know all the ways that a phrasing may land; take the time to check it out with others.

- Using "minority" may imply inferior social position and is often relative to geographic location. When needed, the use of "minority ethnic group" may be preferred over "minority group." Note, "minorities" are actually 85% of the world population and make up the global majority.

- Also commonly used, "racial minority" or "visible minority" typically describe people who are not white; "ethnic minority" refers to people whose ancestry is not English or Anglo-Saxon and "linguistic minority" refers to people whose first language is not English (or not French in Quebec).

- Avoid generalizations based in race or ethnicity, including common expressions with a history rooted in oppression.

- Do not define a person's appearance based primarily on their nationality or cultural background.

"'White South Africa' is a useful construct for bigots who want to perpetuate learned forms of institutional racism and who feel entitled to exclusive access to certain privileges (such as a public Durban beach), also, by extension, a right to open racial bigotry as we have seen on social media from the likes of Sparrow, Justine Van Vuuren, Chris Hartof Standard Bank and Nicole de Klerk."

📖 Lwandile Fikeni, How South Africa should move forward after Penny Sparrow's racist remarks,[213] 10 Jan 2016

Ⓨ Terms used by racial justice activists	**❓** Terms avoided/questioned by racial justice activists
• bias[214]	• BME / BAME[221]
• bigotry[215]	• Caucasian[222]
• black, Black	• colorblind[223]
• cultural appropriation	• diverse[224]
• culture	• ghetto[225] (especially as an adv.[226] or adj.[227])
• ethnic minority	• grandfathered in[228]
• linguistic minority	• gyp, gypped[229]
• microaggression[216]	• minority[230]
• oppression, internalized oppression[217]	• multicultural[231]
• person, people of color (with consideration[218])	• Oriental[232]
• polite white supremacy[219]	• post-racial[233]
• prejudice, discrimination	• races, subspecies[234]
• racial minority	• radicalized[235]
• racism	• thug[236]
• visible minority	• you people, those people[237]
• white supremacy (white privilege[220] is still used)	

Sexual and Domestic Violence SDV

📑 Resources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Sexual Violence: Definitions[238], 2014.
- Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma, Reporting on Sexual Violence[239], 15 July 201.
- Jen Girdish, A Primer on Writing about Domestic Violence[240], 2012.
- Strengthening Health System Responses to Gender-based Violence in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, A Resource Package, Glossary[241], 2011.
- UNWomen, Glossary of Terms from Programming Essentials and Monitoring and Evaluation Sections[242], 2012.

✎ Writing Guidelines

Consent framework

Rape culture[243] – through pervasive, implicit and explicit, social conditioning that tells us it's ok to joke about, threaten, and condone rape – incubates sexual and domestic violence. We need to call out sexual and domestic violence everywhere we see it, including when it is being alluded to in social interactions and when it is unconsciously present in laws and court rulings. To end rape culture, we need to create something to take its place – global consent culture. At its core, consent culture relies on spoken language to ensure complete, timely, and informed consent. To root out a culture that fosters sexual and domestic violence, use language that promotes enthusiastic, verbal consent, that respects individuals' personal boundaries, that fosters vocal anti-rape discussions instead of shutting them down, and that acknowledges and supports vulnerable sharing of personal stories.

"But language is also a key to preventing rape, and the most powerful tool may be the word itself. New research, and a look at statistical patterns of rape-reporting, suggest that the more we talk about rape, the less it happens . . . . Around 32 percent of the men acknowledged they would have "intentions to force a woman to sexual intercourse' if ''nobody would ever know and there wouldn't be any consequences.' That number dropped to 13.6 percent when the question was re-framed to include the word 'rape.'"

📄 Ted Scheinman, The Semantic Power of 'Rape',[244] Pacific Standard Magazine

⊕ Specific Recommendations

- Rape or sexual assault is in no way associated with normal sexual activity. Rape or assault is not "sex." A pattern of abuse is not an "affair."

- Trafficking in women is not the same as prostitution.

- People who have suffered sexual violence may not wish to be described as a victim, unless they choose the word themselves. Many prefer the word survivor.

- Do not assume that rape happens in only one way, and avoid language that reinforces a dominant narrative that rape is only being attacked by a stranger leaping from the bushes.

- Be wary of taking words verbatim from press releases and/or police reports. Keep language as neutral as possible.

- During conflict, rape by combatants is a war crime. Describing it as an unfortunate but predictable aspect of war is not acceptable.

- When describing an assault, try to strike a balance when deciding how much graphic detail to include. Too much can be gratuitous; too little can weaken the survivor's case.

- Content warnings[245] should be used whenever you're including an explicit description of the motivation for, events during, or immediate impact on the survivor after an attack.

- Understand that covering a story about someone who killed or abused their partner is a domestic violence story.

- Do not report from the lens of the abuser. Reporting from the lens of the abuser is the same as victim blaming.

- Resist the narrative that sexual and domestic violence is a "women's issue." It's a human issue.

- Whenever possible, mention where survivors of sexual and domestic violence can get help.

Y Terms used by sexual and domestic violence activists	**?** Terms avoided/questioned by sexual and domestic violence activists
• alleged victim • child sexual abuse content[246] • consent culture • consent[247], enthusiastic consent • economic abuse[248] • gray rape[249] • gun-safety laws • mandatory reporter • rape • rape culture[250]	• accuser • child pornography, child porn, kiddy porn • gun control[251] • victim (unless used to self-identify)

Appendix I: Images

Progressive organizations often choose or commission images to go alongside our campaigns and other content. Here are some questions to ask when choosing imagery.

1. Does the image:

a. Overtly sexualize the subject, especially women or children?

b. Body-shame its subject for being too fat, thin, ugly, unhealthy, etc.?

c. Play into racist or international stereotypes[252], such as the "sad African" or the "all-American" blonde family?

d. Play into sexist stereotypes, such as a male doctor or female housewife?

e. "Out" people as LGBTQ who might not be out?

f. Depict gratuitous violence – in other words, not essential to telling your story?

2. Could you choose a different image that more fully represented the progressive values of your organization?

Here are some ideas for using good images:

Explore the Lean In collection on Getty Images[253], which has non-stereotypical images of women.

Visit Stocksy.com[254], a co-operative that pays its photographers fairly and has a diverse range of photographs.

Use images of people of color instead of white people in communications that don't have anything to do with race. E.g., this example from LeadNow

This weekend our provincial and federal finance ministers are meeting in Ottawa to make a decision that could help millions retire with a decent pension. PEI's proposal to strengthen the Canada Pension Plan has gained incredible momentum, but the feds and some provinces could block the deal.

Can you join thousands calling on our premiers and ministers of finance to strengthen Canada's pension plan for the 21st century?

send your message

3. Where it's possible, could you avoid using stock images of people who don't necessarily have anything to do with your campaign?

Here are some examples of images that are not ok:

The food industry has gone too far this time.
action.sumofus.org
Tell them to think again.

UP Upworthy · 5,416,459 like this
21 minutes ago ·

It's time to shine a bright light on a very dark reality in America. – Melissa Gilkey

Super Bowl Season Has A Dirty Little Secret, And This Congressman Just Exposed It
www.upworthy.com
It's time to shine a bright light on a very dark reality in America.

Appendix II: Additional Resources

A Progressive's Style Guide draws on many, many great resources. Throughout the guide, the resources section includes links to additional tools to help deepen the reader's knowledge in that issue area. Some resources, listed below, contain information that may be useful across issue areas, not specific to just one. In many ways, these guides are also the extended family of *A Progressive's Style Guide*, as well as having a direct impact on this guide's coming into existence.

- AlJazeera's The Listening Post, Stylebooks: The politics of naming[255], 25 May 2013.
- BuzzFeed Style Guide[256], 4 February 2014.
- Guardian and Observer style guide[257], 23 December 2015.
- Kimberlé Crenshaw, Why intersectionality can't wait[258], 24 September 2015.
- Laurel Stvan, That's What Zhe Said: As Genders Blur, Language is Rapidly Adapting[259], 11 January 2016.
- Owl Purdue Online Writing Lab, APA Stylistics: Avoiding Bias[260], 27 February 2016.
- Sian Ferguson, Kyriarchy 101: We're Not Just Fighting the Patriarchy Anymore[261], 23 April 2014.
- The Language of Identity: Using inclusive terminology at Mizzou[262], 2016.
- UBC Public Affairs Inclusive Language Guidelines[263], 10 March 2011.
- UNESCO Guidelines on Gender-Neutral Language[264], 1999.
- University of Newcastle Australia Inclusive Language Guidelines[265], 31 January 2006.
- Virginia Warren. American Philosophical Association, Guidelines for Non-Sexist Use of Language[266], 1986.

Acknowledgements

SumOfUs.org

SumOfUs.org is a global movement of consumers, investors, and workers all around the world, standing together to hold corporations accountable for their actions and forge a new, sustainable and just path for our global economy. It's not going to be fast or easy. But if enough of us come together, we can make a real difference.

Hanna Thomas is a Campaign Manager at SumOfUs.org, based in London, UK. Before joining SumOfUs, she chased UN conferences around the world as part of the youth climate movement, founded the East London Green Jobs Alliance, was Co-Director at The Otesha Project UK, got an MSc in Climate Change & Policy, and worked on crowdfunded solar energy campaigns for 10:10. She also facilitates the People of Colour in Campaigns network in London, and regularly runs trainings for Campaign Bootcamp. When she's not at her laptop, Hanna likes to get on her yoga mat, cycle around, sing, watch films, and cook.

ActivistEditor.com

Anna Hirsch is a freelance editor who wears her heart on the printed sleeve. While also studying clinical psychology and developing herself as a multi-modality therapist and relationship counselor, Anna enjoys her community in Oakland, California, through art-making, dance, running, and raising awareness about compersion, the joy we feel when witnessing others' joy.

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