College of the Atlantic
life changing. world changing.

College of the Atlantic Communications and Style Guide

Updated 9.6.22

Welcome to the College of the Atlantic Communications and Style Guide.

COA seeks to best serve our students, alumnx, and the wider world by building a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment. Developing and maintaining a consistent written style and standardized approach to communications are important components of meeting these goals. This guide seeks to enable a cohesive approach to how we communicate within, and beyond, the COA community in ways that allow the highest levels of access, equity, and inclusivity.

This document is meant to serve as a style guide for publications, reports, and other print and electronic documents created and distributed under the COA banner. As part of our goal of making our language empowerful and inclusive, it also includes guidelines for the avoidance of bias and tokenism in COA's print and digital environments. Finally, this guide includes a link to the COA communications resources shared drive, where you will find letterhead, slideshow templates, and more.

Please note the following:

- Much of COA style is based on the *Chicago Manual of Style*, and for instances not covered in this guide the Chicago Manual may be used as a fallback source. Where COA style is different from Chicago style, please defer to COA style.
- For press releases, please refer to the *Associated Press Stylebook* and the *American Associated Press Inclusive Language Guidelines*.
- For inclusive language issues not included in this guide, please refer to the *Conscious Style Guide*.
- Please feel free to contribute additions, suggestions, and questions on style to COA communications director Rob Levin.

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BRANDING

- "College of the Atlantic" should be spelled out on first reference in all materials and formal communication.
    - There is no need for a "the" before College of the Atlantic. We are not *the* College of the Atlantic, but College of the Atlantic.
    - Second reference and on can be "COA"

- Use College of the Atlantic, or COA, before any COA subset; do not use it as a possessive.
    - Examples:
        - College of the Atlantic Blum Gallery, not College of the Atlantic's Blum Gallery.
        - COA Allied Whale, not Allied Whale at COA
        - COA Beech Hill Farm, not COA's Beech Hill Farm

- When referring to College of the Atlantic as "the college," college is always lowercase.

- COA boilerplate
    - The following should be used whenever an official description of the college is needed:
        - College of the Atlantic is the first college in the US to focus on the relationship between humans and the environment. The intentionally small school of 350 students and 35 faculty enriches the liberal arts tradition through a distinctive educational philosophy—human ecology. A human ecological perspective integrates knowledge from all academic disciplines and from personal experience to investigate—and ultimately improve—the relationships between human beings and our social, natural, built, and technological environments. The human ecological perspective guides all aspects of education,

research, activism, and interactions among the college's students, faculty, staff, and trustees. Learn more at coa.edu.

- COA communications resources shared drive can be found in your shared drives on drive.google.com. The resource includes the following:
    - COA logo and seal
        - The COA logo or seal should be incorporated into internal- and external-facing documents whenever possible. Versions of both can be found in the communications resources shared drive. Please reach out if you need alternate colors.
    - COA letterhead
        - Using a COA letterhead for official communication, both internally and externally, is a great way to ensure brand consistency.
        - You can find a COA letterhead template in the shared drive, and you can get a template in the College of the Atlantic templates section of docs.google.home.
        - If you prefer to work in Microsoft Word, just download the Google doc as a Word document.
        - The best way to share an official communication is as a PDF. You should not be sending word docs or Google docs.
    - COA slideshow
        - The COA slideshow templates for PowerPoint and Google Slides are a helpful way to build professional, branded presentations. Just replace the images with your own and you are on your way.
        - Slideshow templates are available in the COA communications resources shared drive.

- Fonts
    - COA currently utilizes two official font families for publications:

        - Mrs. Eaves (serif) and Mr. Eaves (sans-serif) for advancement and general pieces
        - Baker Signet (serif) and Interstate (sans serif) for admissions
    - COA staff and faculty are expected to use one of these font families when creating and distributing branded publications
    - These are Adobe fonts, and can be activated at fonts.adobe.com if you have access to the creative cloud. Once activated, they will automatically install into Microsoft Office and Word.
    - For internal correspondence, memos, reports, and etc., COA's standard font is Open Sans

- Sharing documents
    - The best way to share an official communication is as a PDF. You should not be sending word docs or Google docs. These are fine for internal use, but for communications with external parties, you should always use a PDF.
    - Press releases are shared as Word documents so they may be easily transferred.

- Place names should be spelled out fully on first reference
    - Beatrix Farrand Gardens
    - Blair Dining Hall (Take-A-Break or TAB)
    - College of the Atlantic Beech Hill Farm
    - College of the Atlantic Beech Hill Farmstand
    - College of the Atlantic Cox Protectorate
    - College of the Atlantic Alice Eno Field Research Station on Great Duck Island
    - College of the Atlantic Edward McC. Blair Marine Research Station on Mount Desert Rock
    - College of the Atlantic Peggy Rockefeller Farms
    - Community Organic Garden

  - Davis Center for Human Ecology
  - Deering Common Community Center
  - Ethel H. Blum Gallery
  - Geographic Information Systems Laboratory
  - Kathryn W. Davis Student Resident Village
  - Kathryn W. Davis Center for International & Regional Studies
  - George B. Dorr Museum of Natural History
  - Leslie C. Brewer Great Hall
  - The Lou Rabineau Educational Studies Center
  - Newlin Gardens
  - Thomas S. Gates Community Center
  - The Turrets

- Chair names should always be used on first reference when referring to chairholders, and should be spelled out fully on first reference
  - Andrew S. Griffith Chair for the Dean of Administration **(Bear Paul)**
  - Allan Stone Chair in the Visual Arts **(Catherine Clinger)**
  - Anne T. and Robert M. Bass Chair in Earth Systems and GeoScience **(Sarah Hall)**
  - Charles Eliot Chair in Ecological Planning, Policy, and Design **(open)**
  - Cody van Heerden Chair in Economics and Quantitative Social Sciences **(Davis Taylor)**
  - David Hales Sustainability Coordinator **(open)**
  - David Rockefeller Family Chair in Ecosystem Management and Protection **(Ken Cline)**
  - Elizabeth Battles Newlin Chair in Botany **(Susan Letcher)**
  - James Russell Wiggins Chair in Government and Polity **(Jamie McKown)**
  - Joanne Woodward and Paul Newman Chair in Performing Arts **(Jodi Baker)**
  - Kim M. Wentworth Chair in Environmental Studies **(Steve Ressel)**

- Lalage and Steven Rales Chair in Chemistry **(Reuben Hudson)**
- Lisa Stewart Chair in Literature and Women's Studies **(Karen Waldron)**
- McNally Family Chair in Human Ecology and Philosophy **(Heather Lakey)**
- Mitchell and Emily Rales Chair in Ecology **(Chris Petersen)**
- Partridge Chair in Food and Sustainable Agriculture Systems **(Kourtney Collum)**
- Rachel Carson Chair in Human Ecology **(Suzanne Morse)**
- Richard J. Borden Chair in the Humanities **(Bonnie Tai)**
- Sharpe-McNally Chair in Green and Socially Responsible Business **(Jay Friedlander)**
- Steven. K. Katona Chair in Marine Studies **(Sean Todd)**
- T.A. Cox Chair in Studio Arts **(Nancy Andrews)**
- William H. Drury, Jr. Chair in Ecology and Natural History **(John Anderson)**

STYLE

- Abbreviations
    - Use periods with most lowercase and mixed-case abbreviations (e.g, a.m., etc., vol., Inc., Jr., Mrs., Tex.)
    - Omit periods with most uppercase abbreviations (examples: FBI, IRS, ATM, US, NATO, NBC, TX).

- Alumnx
    - COA uses the gender neutral term "alumnx" to refer to alumni (plural)
    - COA uses the term “alum” for singular usage
    - Class years should always be listed when using the full name of alumnx, and the class year should be preceded by a left facing singular quotation mark
        - Example: Robin Smith ’10
    - Students who do not graduate are still considered alumnx, their class years are put in parentheses
        - Example: Marc Smith (’21)

- Areas of study
    - Areas of study are not capitalized.
        - Example: "BA in chemistry," not "BA in Chemistry."
        - Example: “human ecology,” not “Human Ecology.”
    - Faculty areas of expertise are not capitalized.
        - Example: “faculty member in philosophy," "professor of philosophy"

- Coa.edu news and events
    - Block quotes
        - No attribution
    - Headlines and event titles

        - Sentence case, present simple tense preferred, future tense when applicable
    - Photo captions
        - Present simple tense preferred, past/future tense when applicable.
        - Often a good place to add information not in article, summarize story.
        - Add links.
    - Summary fields
        - Present simple tense preferred, present perfect simple tense when applicable
    - Timelessness
        - Keep dates out of stories as much as possible so that they always seem relevant. There is almost no reason to reference specific dates.

- Commas
    - We use the Oxford comma
    - Include a comma before the word “and” at the end of a list of three or more items: “cookies, muffins, and brownies.”

- Dashes and hyphens
    - Dashes and hyphens should be tight (no spaces around them)
    - There are two types of dash
        - The en dash is shorter, approximately the length of the letter n
        - The em dash is longer, approximately the length of the letter m
        - The shorter en dash (–) is used to mark ranges and with the meaning “to” in phrases like “Dover–Calais crossing”
        - The longer em dash (—) is used to separate extra information or mark a break in a sentence.

  - Hyphens, the shortest mark, are used to combine words (as in well-behaved or long-running)
  - You can learn more about hyphens and dashes here

- Degrees
  - Full degree names are capitalized, abbreviations do not have periods. Examples:
    - Bachelor of Arts (BA)
    - Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA)
    - Master of Arts (MA)
  - Casual degree names are not capitalized. Examples:
    - bachelor's, bachelor's degree
    - master's, master's degree

- Faculty
  - COA does not technically have professors, we have "faculty members in." However, "professor" has come into use at the college. Both uses are allowable, but professor is preferred when referring to permanent faculty.
    - Professor is indicative of a terminal degree and permanent status
  - Lecturers should be referred to as such
  - Visiting or adjunct faculty members should be referred to as such

- Livestream, livestreaming
  - No hyphen

- Locations
  - Regions are generally capitalized
    - E.g., Downeast
  - Mount Desert Island

        - Use Mount Desert Island on first reference, MDI after.
        - Do not use Mt. Desert Island.
        - It is "the island", not "the Island"
    - Frenchman Bay
        - Not Frenchman's Bay, Frenchmen Bay, or Frenchmans Bay.
    - States
        - Always spell out state names. Example: She lives in Bar Harbor, Maine, and attends COA.
        - Except press releases, when abbreviations must be used: Bar Harbor, ME.

- Numbers
    - Always spell out any number beginning a sentence (or rewrite the sentence)
    - Spell out numbers one through nine, then use numerals: 10, 11, 12, etc.
    - If an abbreviation or a symbol is used for the unit of measure, the quantity is always expressed by a numeral: 3 mi / 55 mph / 7 h / 3 g / 35 mm film / 3'6”
    - For two or more quantities, the abbreviation or symbol is repeated if there is no space between it and the number but not if it is separated: 35%–50% / 10℃–15℃ / 6”×9” / 2 × 5 cm

- Periods
    - Single space between sentences

- Quotation marks
    - Commas and periods always go inside the quotes

- Student class years

- Names of current student names are always listed with their expected graduation class year, and the class year should be preceded by a left facing single quotation mark
- Example: Patty Smith ’23

- Time
  - Centuries
    - Use numerals, not capitalized
      - Example: 21st century
  - Decades
    - Use numerals
      - Example: 1980s, the ‘80s
  - Months
    - Capitalize the names of months in all uses. Spell out full name
  - Trimesters
    - Do not capitalize. Example:
      - winter term 2020
  - Seasons
    - Do not capitalize. Example:
      - winter, summer, fall
  - Time of day
    - Use lowercase a.m. and p.m., with periods. Always use figures, with a space between the time and the a.m. or p.m. Example:
      - 10 a.m.
    - If on the hour, use 11 a.m., not 11:00 a.m.
    - When writing a time frame covering a time before noon or afternoon use 9-11 a.m. (no spaces with hyphen) instead of 9 a.m.-11 a.m.

- Titles
  - Title case and italics for:

        - Books, art exhibits or collections, journals, TV shows, songs, movies, paintings, musical compositions, plays, titles of short stories, library collections, periodicals, newspapers, newspaper sections published separately, course titles, and poems.
        - Boat names are also italicized: ie. M/V *Osprey* (notice, there is no "the" in front of the boat name).
        - Note: The Summer Institute's theme should be italicized in a sentence, but not when used in a header.
    - Title case and quotation marks for:
        - Articles, episodes, chapter titles, lectures, speeches, workshops
    - Associations, organizations, societies, meetings, conferences, and others
        - Capitalize the full names of associations, societies, unions, meetings, conferences, and often the shortened forms of such names.
        - The generic term society, committee, union etc. are usually lowercased when used alone.
    - coa.edu events, news stories, press releases
        - All headlines and event titles in sentence case
    - Committees
        - Use title case
    - Lists of capitalized items
        - If they have the same ending, lowercase that ending: eg: Bard and Wesleyan colleges, or the Penobscot and Presumpscot rivers
    - Offices at COA
        - Capitalize only if it's the formal name: e.g., Office of Admission. The admission office is in Kaelber Hall.
    - PhD/Dr

    - If warranted, add to end of name, but refrain from referring to Dr. Waldron or Dr. Petersen: eg: Chris Petersen, PhD, not Dr. Petersen (though Paul Farmer is Dr. Farmer, a medical doctor).
    - If you're using PhD in a document, or if you're working on a document where it seems essential to refer to terminal degrees, make sure everyone who holds a terminal degree is recognized.
- Positions
    - Capitalize position titles only if full official title is before a person's name, which includes organization name. E.g., COA President Darron Collins, Darron Collins, president of COA.
- Student projects
    - Capitalized only (no italics, no quotations)
- Artworks
    - *Title (*in italics), artist, date, material, size (e.g., 12"x17")

RACE, ETHNICITY, AND NATIONALITIES

- Ethnicity
    - A characterization of people based on having a shared culture (e.g., language, food, music, dress, values, and beliefs) related to common ancestry and shared history.

- Ethnic identity
    - An individual's sense of being a person who is defined, in part, by membership in a specific ethnic group. This sense is usually considered to be a complex construct involving shared social, cultural, linguistic, religious, and often racial factors but identical with none of them.

- Ethnic bias
    - Differential treatment toward individuals based on their ethnic group, often resulting in inequities in such areas as education, employment, health care, and housing. With regards to testing and measurement, ethnic bias refers to contamination or deficiency in an instrument that differentially affects the scores of those from different ethnic groups. Ideally, researchers strive to create culture-fair tests.

- Race
    - The social construction and categorization of people based on perceived shared physical traits that result in the maintenance of a sociopolitical hierarchy.

- Racial identity
    - An individual's sense of being defined, in part, by membership in a particular racial group. The strength of this sense depends on the extent to which an individual has processed and internalized the

psychological, sociopolitical, cultural, and other contextual factors related to membership in the group. Given the socially constructed nature of racial categories, racial identifications can change over time in different contexts.

- African American/Black
    - African American and Black are not always interchangeable. “African American” should not be used as an umbrella term for people of African ancestry worldwide because it obscures other ethnicities or national origins, such as Nigerian, Kenyan, Jamaican, Bahamian, Puerto Rican, or Panamanian; in these cases, use “Black.”
    - Both terms should always be capitalized
    - The terms “Negro,” “colored,” and “Afro-American” are outdated; therefore, their use is inappropriate.

- Indigenous
    - Although an official definition of Indigenous is not agreed on, the United Nations has developed an understanding of the term based on self-identification; historical continuity to pre colonial and/or pre settler societies; links to territories and resources; distinct social, economic, and political systems; and possession of distinct languages, cultures, and beliefs (Native American Journalists Association, n.d.).
    - Capitalize “Indigenous” and “Indigenous People,” according to APA style (not Chicago).
    - When writing about Indigenous Peoples, use the names that they call themselves. In general, refer to an Indigenous group as a “people” or “nation” rather than as a “tribe.”
    - For information on citing the traditional knowledge or oral traditions of Indigenous Peoples, as well as the capitalization of terms related to Indigenous Peoples, see Section 5.7 of the APA Publication Manual (APA, 2020b).

- Indigenous land acknowledgement
  - Indigenous land acknowledgment is an effort to recognize the Indigenous past, present, and future of a particular location and to understand our own place within that relationship. Usually, land acknowledgments take the form of written and/or verbal statements. It is becoming more and more common to see land acknowledgments delivered at conferences, community gatherings, places of worship, concerts, festivals, and so forth.
  - COA has no official land acknowledgement statement or policy at this time. The guide humbly offers:
    - Mount Desert Island is located within the traditional lands of the Wabanaki People.

- People of color
  - This term represents a shift from the terms ”minority” or ”colored people” to refer to individuals from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Instead, use “people of color” or ”communities of color” when referring to groups from diverse backgrounds.
  - Neither “people of color” nor “communities of color” should be capitalized
  - When appropriate, use the terms underserved, underrepresented, or marginalized to describe populations; however, use the specific group title whenever possible. For example: LGBTQ+ students, Black students, etc.

- BIPOC
  - An acronym that stands for Black, Inidgenous, and people of color. Therefore it is always capitalized as “BIPOC”
  - The term BIPOC is used to acknowledge that not all people of color face equal levels of injustice.The construction of the term “BIPOC”

recognizes that Black and Indigenous people are severely impacted by systemic racial injustices in the United States.
    - Some don't appreciate the hierarchical aspect of the term and prefer to use "people/persons of color" and/or "communities of color."
    - It is a noun and since it includes the word "people.'' It would be redundant to say "BIPOC people."

- Asian/Asian American
    - When writing about people of Asian ancestry from Asia, the term "Asian" is appropriate; "Asian" refers to Asians in Asia, not in the United States, and should not be used to refer to Asian Americans.
    - For people of Asian descent from the United States or Canada, the appropriate term is "Asian American" or "Asian Canadian," respectively.
    - It is problematic to group "Asian" and "Asian American" as if they are synonymous. This usage reinforces the idea that Asian Americans are perpetual foreigners.
    - The outdated term "Oriental" is primarily used to refer to cultural objects such as carpets and is pejorative when used to refer to people.
    - To provide more specificity, "Asian origin" may be divided regionally, for example, into South Asia. The term "East Asian" can be used; however, refer to the specific nation or region of origin when possible.

- Hispanic, Latin(a/o), Latinx
    - When writing about people who identify as Hispanic, Latina/o, Latinx, Chicano, or another related designation, authors should consult with their participants to determine the appropriate choice.
    - Note that "Hispanic" is not necessarily an all-encompassing term, and the labels "Hispanic" and "Latinx" have different connotations.
    - The term "Latinx" (and its related forms) might be preferred by those originating from Latin America, including Brazil.

- Some use the word “Hispanic” to refer to those who speak Spanish; however, not every group in Latin America speaks Spanish (e.g., in Brazil, the official language is Portuguese).
- The word “Latino” is gendered (i.e., “Latino” is masculine and “Latina” is feminine). “Latinx” can be used as a gender-neutral or nonbinary term inclusive of all genders.
- Use the term(s) your participants or population uses; if you are not working directly with this population but it is a focus of your research, it may be helpful to explain why you chose the term you used or to choose a more inclusive term like “Latinx.”
- In general, naming a nation or region of origin is preferred (e.g., Bolivian, Salvadoran, or Costa Rican is more specific than Latino, Latinx, Latin American, or Hispanic).

- American Arab, Middle Eastern, and North African
  - There is no standard definition; Middle Eastern racialized group includes people with ancestry from countries or territories such as Jordan, Iran, and Palestine.
  - North African includes people with ancestry from countries such as Algeria, Egypt, and Libya.
  - People from Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) countries have been racialized in the United States, especially after 9/11, so much so that the US Census Bureau recommended the inclusion of MENA as a category in the 2020 census (APA, 2019b; Krogstad, 2014), though ultimately this category was not used.

- People of European origin
  - When writing about people of European ancestry, the terms “white” and “European American” are acceptable. Adjust the latter term as needed for location, for example, “European,” “European American,”

and “European Australian” for people of European descent living in Europe, the United States, and Australia, respectively.

- The use of the term “caucasian” as an alternative to “white” or “European” is discouraged because it originated as a way of classifying white people as a race to be favorably compared with other races. As with all discussions of race and ethnicity, it is preferable to be more specific about regional (e.g., Southern European, Scandinavian) or national (e.g., Italian, Irish, Swedish, French, Polish) origin when possible.
- We do not capitalize “white” or “caucasian.” For many people, Black reflects a shared sense of identity and community. White carries a different set of meanings; capitalizing the word in this context risks following the lead of white supremacists.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER DIVERSITY

- Gender
    - The socially constructed ideas about behavior, actions, and roles of a particular sex.

- Gender-inclusive language
    - When describing a generic or hypothetical person whose gender is irrelevant to the context of the usage, do not use gendered pronouns such as “he” and “she” or gendered pronoun combinations such as “he or she” because these pronouns and pronoun combinations assume gender; instead, use the singular “they” because it is gender inclusive.
    - When describing a specific person, use that person’s pronouns (e.g., “he,” “she,” “they”). Ask the person for their pronouns rather than making assumptions.
    - Avoid gendered nouns when describing people who may be of any gender, as in the following examples: *you guys, ladies and gentlemen, policeman, chairman, congressman, freshman*. Instead, use gender-inclusive nouns to describe people who may be of any gender, as in the following examples: *everyone, folks, folx, friends, loved ones, or you all*; *distinguished guests; police officer; chair or chairperson; congressperson or member of congress; and first-year student or first year.*

- Gender identity
    - A component of gender that describes a person’s psychological sense of their gender.

    - Many people describe gender identity as a deeply felt, inherent sense of being a boy, a man, or male; a girl, a woman, or female; or a nonbinary gender (e.g., genderqueer, gender nonbinary, gender neutral, agender, gender fluid) that may or may not correspond to a person's sex assigned at birth, presumed gender based on sex assignment, or primary or secondary sex characteristics.
    - Gender identity applies to all individuals and is not a characteristic only of transgender or gender-nonbinary individuals. Gender identity is distinct from sexual orientation; thus, the two must not be conflated (e.g., a gay transgender man has a masculine gender identity and a gay sexual orientation, a straight cisgender woman has a feminine gender identity and a straight sexual orientation).

- Cisgender
    - Refers to a person whose gender identity aligns with sex assigned at birth

- Transgender
    - An umbrella term used to describe the full range of people whose gender identity and/or gender role do not conform to what is typically associated with their sex assigned at birth
    - The term "transgendered" is inappropriate because of the connotations that being transgender is something that is done to a person and to create distance from misconceptions that being trans requires a before/after, surgery, or other formal transition.

- Gender and pronoun usage
    - Do not use the term "preferred pronouns" because this implies a choice about one's gender. Use the term "pronouns" or "identified pronouns" instead.

    - When writing about a known individual, use that person's identified pronouns. When referring to individuals whose identified pronouns are not known or when the gender of a generic or hypothetical person is irrelevant within the context, use the singular "they" to avoid making assumptions about an individual's gender. Use the forms "they," "them," "theirs," and so forth.

- LGBTQ, LGBTQ+, LGBTQIA, and LGBTQIA+
    - Abbreviations such as LGBTQ, LGBTQ+, LGBTQIA, and LGBTQIA+ may be used to refer to multiple groups.
    - The form "LGBT" is considered outdated, but there is no consensus about which abbreviation including or beyond LGBTQ to use. If you use the abbreviation LGBTQ (or a related one), define it and ensure that it is representative of the groups about which you are writing.
    - Be specific about the groups to which you refer (e.g., *do not use LGBTQ and related abbreviations to write about legislation that primarily affects transgender people; instead, specify the impacted group*). However, if in doubt, use one of the umbrella terms rather than a potentially inaccurate abbreviation.
    - LGBTQIA+ populations include, but are not limited to, individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, transgender, two-spirit, queer, and/or intersex. Individuals with same-sex or same-gender attractions or behaviors and those with a difference in sex development are also included.
    - These populations also encompass those who do not self-identify with one of these terms but whose sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or reproductive development is characterized by nonbinary constructs of sexual orientation, gender, and/or sex.

- Sexual orientation and identity

- Refers to an enduring disposition to experience sexual, affectional, or romantic attractions to men, women, nonbinary people, and so forth. It also encompasses an individual's sense of personal and social identity based on those attractions, behaviors expressing them, and membership in a community of others who share them.
- The term "homosexual" should not be used in place of "sexual orientation."

- Sexual orientation and gender diversity: terms to avoid and suggested alternatives

Term to avoid	Suggested alternative	Comment
birth sex natal sex	assigned sex sex assigned at birth	
born a girl, born female born a boy, born male	assigned female at birth (AFAB) assigned male at birth (AMAB)	
hermaphrodite tranny transvestite transsexual (unless being used medically)	LGBTQ+, LBGTQIA+, etc. transgender people trans and gender nonbinary folks or folx genderqueer queer*	The term "tranny" is considered a slur. *Consider your audience when using the term "queer;" not everyone

		receives this word positively.

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

- Classism
    - The assignment of characteristics of worth and ability based on actual or perceived social class, and the attitudes, policies, and practices that maintain unequal valuing based on class.
    - Classism can be expressed via prejudiced or discriminatory attitudes, language, or behaviors directed toward individuals based on perceived or actual social class. This can occur in interpersonal interactions, education, housing, health care, legal assistance, politics, public policy, and more.

- Class privilege
    - Encompasses the unearned advantages, protections, immunities, and access experienced by a small class of people who typically carry special status or power within a society or culture.
    - This status and privilege are typically conferred based on wealth and financial status, occupational prestige (e.g., the perceived societal valuation of an occupational class or job title), title/leadership within a culture, or fame/recognition.
    - These advantages are typically granted to the disadvantage of others and contribute to the establishment of perceived and concrete hierarchies within a community, culture, and/or society.

- Socioeconomic status
    - Encompasses not only income but also educational attainment, occupational prestige, and subjective perceptions of social status and social class.
    - Encompasses quality-of-life attributes and opportunities afforded to people within society and is a consistent predictor of a vast array of psychological outcomes.

- Socioeconomic status: Terms to avoid and suggested alternatives

Term to avoid	Suggested alternative	Comment
the poor low-class people poor people	people whose incomes are below the federal poverty threshold people whose self-reported incomes were in the lowest income bracket	Many people find the terms “low class” and “poor” pejorative. Use person-first language instead. Define income brackets and levels if possible.

DISABILITIES AND DIFFERENCES

- Ableism
    - Stereotyping, prejudicial attitudes, discriminatory behavior, and social oppression toward people with disabilities to inhibit the rights and wellbeing of people with disabilities, which is currently the largest minority group in the United States (APA, 2021b; Bogart & Dunn, 2019).
    - Understanding the concept of ableism, and how it manifests in language choices, is critical for researchers who focus on marginalized groups such as the autistic community.

- Disability
    - Broadly defined as the interaction of physical, psychological, intellectual, and socioemotional differences or impairments with the social environment (World Health Organization, 2001).
    - The members of some groups of people with disabilities—effectively subcultures within the larger culture of disability—have ways of referring to themselves that they would prefer others to adopt. The overall principle for using disability language is to maintain the integrity (worth and dignity) of all individuals as human beings.

- Neurodiversity
    - A term that evolved from the advocacy movement on behalf of individuals with autism spectrum disorders and has been embraced by other groups of individuals with neurologically based disabilities (e.g., learning disabilities).
    - Neurodiversity suggests that these disabilities are a natural variation in brain differences and that the workplace should adapt to them.

- Disability status: Terms to avoid and suggested alternatives

Term to avoid	Suggested alternative	Comment
Use of person-first and identity-first language rather than condescending terms		
special needs physically challenged mentally challenged mentally retarded handi-capable	**person with a disability** **person who has a disability** **disabled person** **people with intellectual disabilities** **child with a congenital disability** **child with a birth impairment** **physically disabled person** **person with a physical disability**	Use person-first or identity-first language as is appropriate for the community or person being discussed. The language used should be selected with the understanding that disabled people's expressed preferences regarding identification supersede matters of style. Avoid terms that are condescending or patronizing.

mentally ill	**person with a mental disorder** **person with a mental illness** **person living with a mental health condition**	
Description of deaf or hard-of-hearing people		
person with deafness person who is deaf	**Deaf person**	Most Deaf or Deaf-Blind individuals culturally prefer to be called Deaf or DeafBlind (capitalized) rather than “hearing-impaired,” “people with hearing loss,” and so forth.
hearing-impaired person person who is hearing impaired person with hearing loss	**hard-of-hearing person** **person who is hard-of-hearing**	
person with deafness and blindness	**Deaf-Blind person**	

Description of blind people and people who are visually impaired		
person with blindness visually challenged person sight-challenged person	**blind person** **person who is blind** **visually impaired person** **vision-impaired person** **person who is visually impaired** **person who is vision impaired**	
Use of pictorial metaphors, negativistic terms, and slurs		
wheelchair-bound person	**wheelchair user** **person in a wheelchair**	Avoid language that uses pictorial metaphors, negativistic terms that imply restriction, and slurs that insult or disparage a particular group. As with other diverse groups, insiders in disability culture may use these terms with one another; it is not

		appropriate for an outsider (nondisabled person) to use these terms.
AIDS victim	**person with AIDS**	
brain damaged	**person with a traumatic brain injury**	
cripple invalid	**person with a physical disability**	
defective nuts crazy	**person with a mental disorder** **person with a mental illness** **person living with a mental illness**	
alcoholic	**person with alcohol use disorder**	
meth addict	**person with substance use disorder**	

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR REDUCING BIAS

(APA:https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/bias-free-language/general-principles)

1. Describe at the appropriate level of specificity

Precision is essential in any type of writing; when you refer to a person or persons, choose words that are accurate, clear, and free from bias or prejudicial connotations. Bias, like inaccurate or unclear language, can be a form of imprecision. For example, using “man” to refer to all human beings is not as accurate or inclusive as using the terms “individuals,” “people,” or “persons.”

- **Focus on relevant characteristics and be appropriately specific**
    - Be mindful to describe only relevant characteristics. Although it is possible to describe a person’s age, disability, gender identity, racial and ethnic identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or other characteristic without bias, it is not always necessary to include all of this information in your writing.
    - For example, you would be unlikely to mention peoples’ sexual orientation in an article about their academic life because sexual orientation is not relevant to their academic standing; however, you would likely mention peoples’ gender in an article about stereotype threat because gender is relevant to the examination of stereotype threat.
    - There may be multiple relevant characteristics to discuss given certain contexts; when this is the case, address the ways in which the characteristics intersect, as appropriate.
    - Once you have determined which characteristics to describe, choose terms that are appropriate and specific, which will depend on the person and/or theme being portrayed in your writing.

    - Do not mention characteristics gratuitously; however, when in doubt, be more specific rather than less because it is easier to aggregate data than to disaggregate them.
    - Consider the appropriate level of specificity early in the research process—such as when designing the outline of a text—because it may not be possible to gather more information once the story is underway or finished.
    - Using specific terms improves readers' ability to understand the extent of your arguments and context of your writing.

- **Examples of specificity by topic**

  Remember these are only possible options, the proper choice will depend on the situation, and these examples represent just some of the available options.

    - When writing about age, exact ages or age ranges (e.g., 15–18 years old, 65–80 years old) are more specific than broad categories (e.g., under 18 years old, over 65 years old). Also include the age mean and median in addition to the range of ages to increase the specificity of the information.
    - When writing about disability, names of conditions (e.g., Alzheimer's disease) are more specific than categories of conditions (e.g., types of dementia) or general references such as "people with disabilities."
    - When writing about gender identity, descriptors with modifiers (e.g., cisgender women, transgender women) are more specific than descriptors without modifiers (e.g., women) or general nongendered terms (e.g., people, individuals; see the bias-free language section for gender for how to differentiate between gender and sex).
    - When writing about racial or ethnic groups, the nation or region of origin (e.g., Chinese Americans, Mexican Americans) is more specific than a generalized origin (e.g., Asian Americans, Latin Americans).

- When writing about sexual orientation, the names of people's orientations (e.g., lesbians, gay men, bisexual people, straight people) are more specific than broad group labels (e.g., gay).
- When writing about socioeconomic status, income ranges or specific designations (e.g., below the federal poverty threshold for a family of four) are more specific than general labels (e.g., low income).

- **Acknowledge relevant differences that do exist**
  - Part of writing without bias is not only recognizing that differences should be mentioned only when relevant but also acknowledging relevant differences when they do exist. Evaluate the meaning of the word "difference" carefully in relation to the target population, not the dominant group.
    - For example, a researcher who wants to generalize the study results to people overall, or students overall, and so forth, should assess and report whether the sample studied is different from the target population and, if so, describe how it is different.

2. Be sensitive to labels

Respect the language people use to describe themselves; that is, call people what they call themselves. Accept that language changes with time and that individuals within groups sometimes disagree about the designations they use. Make an effort to determine what is appropriate for your study, paper or story particularly when these designations are debated within groups. You may need to ask your subjects which designations they use and/or consult self-advocacy groups that represent these communities to research the issue if you are not working directly with the people you may be writing about.

However, note that some individuals may use slurs or stigmatizing language to refer to themselves; writers should use extreme caution before repeating this

language because doing so can propagate that stigma (see the bias-free language pages on disability for more on the use of stigmatizing language when talking about these topics).

- **Acknowledge people's humanity**
    - Choose labels with sensitivity, ensuring that the individuality and humanity of people are respected.
    - Avoid using adjectives as nouns to label people (e.g., "the gays," "the poor") or labels that equate people with their condition (e.g., "amnesiacs," "schizophrenics," "the learning disabled," "drug users").
    - Instead, use adjectival forms (e.g., gay men, older adults) or nouns with descriptive phrases (e.g., people living in poverty, people with learning disabilities, people who use drugs).
    - Some groups (e.g., the Deaf) have chosen to use a capitalized label to identify and promote a sense of unity and community; use the label that the community uses, even when that label is adjectival (note, however, that not everyone who has hearing loss identifies as Deaf).
    - In particular, the use of labels where disability is concerned is evolving, and people may disagree about the preferred approach.
        - When writing about disability, person-first language (e.g., "a person with paraplegia" rather than "a paraplegic"), identity-first language (e.g., "an autistic person" rather than "a person with autism"), or both may be acceptable depending on the group you are writing about.

- **Provide operational definitions and labels**
    - If you provide operational definitions of groups early in your text (e.g., "participants scoring a minimum of X on the Y scale constituted the high verbal group, and those scoring below X constituted the low verbal group"), the best practice is to describe participants thereafter in terms of the measures used to classify them (e.g., "the contrast for

the high verbal group was statistically significant"), provided the terms are not inappropriate.
    - A pejorative label should not be used in any form. Abbreviations or series labels for groups usually sacrifice clarity and may be problematic: "LDs" or "LD group" to describe people with specific learning difficulties is problematic; "HVAs" for "high verbal ability group" is difficult to decipher. "Group A" is not problematic, but it is also not descriptive.
    - Instead, ensure that operational group labels are clear and appropriate (e.g., "group with dysgraphia").

- **Avoid false hierarchies**
    - Compare groups with care. Bias occurs when authors use one group (often their own group) as the standard against which others are judged (e.g., using citizens of the United States as the standard without specifying why that group was chosen).
        - For example, usage of "normal" may prompt readers to make the comparison with "abnormal," thus stigmatizing individuals with differences. Likewise, contrasting lesbians with "the general public" or "normal women" portrays lesbians as marginal to society. More appropriate comparison groups for lesbians might be straight individuals, straight women, or gay men.
        - Use parallel designations for groups, especially when presenting racial and ethnic identity information.
    - Be aware that the order of social group presentation may imply that the first-mentioned group is the norm or standard and that later-mentioned groups are abnormal or deviant. Thus, the phrases "men and women" and "white Americans and racial minorities" subtly reflect the perceived dominance of men and white people over other groups (furthermore, listing specific racial minority groups is

preferable to writing about racial minorities in general) when talking about racial and ethnic identity.
    - Similarly, when presenting group data, placing socially dominant groups such as men and White people on the left side of a graph or at the top of a table may also imply that these groups are the universal standard.
    - When referring to multiple groups, thoughtfully consider the order in which to present them. Do not put groups in order of social dominance by default; instead, consider options such as alphabetical order or sample size order.
    - For ease of comprehension, list groups in the same order consistently throughout a paper.

3. Intersectionality

When authors write about personal characteristics, they should be sensitive to intersectionality—that is, to the way in which individuals are shaped by and identify with a vast array of cultural, structural, sociobiological, economic, and social contexts. Intersectionality is a paradigm that addresses the multiple dimensions of identity and social systems as they intersect with one another and relate to inequality, such as racism, genderism, heterosexism, ageism, and classism, among other variables. Thus, individuals are located within a range of social groups whose structural inequalities can result in marginalized identities.

- Because people are unique, many identities are possible.
    - As one example of a group with an intersectional identity, Black lesbian women may have similarities to and differences from other oppressed groups in the meanings that are assigned to their multiple positionalities. Black women may identify with the oppressive and discriminatory experiences of White women as well as with those of Black men.

    - At the same time, Black lesbian women's experiences may not be equivalent to those of these other groups. They may experience discrimination as a response to their race, gender, and/or sexual orientation. Thus, their experience does not necessarily reflect the sum of oppressions of racism, sexism, and heteronormativity (i.e., race + sex + heterosexism) but rather their unique identities and social locations as Black lesbian women that are not based in or driven by the perspectives of White women or of Black men. That is, for example, even though Black women and White women are both women, and Black women and Black men are both Black, this does not mean that the perspectives and experiences of the latter groups are the same as or related to those of Black lesbian women.

- Intersectional identities also include experiences of privileged contexts that intersect with those of oppression.
    - For example, a Laotian immigrant woman with a disability may experience a sense of safety and privilege because of her legal immigration status in the United States, but she may experience discrimination and a lack of access to appropriate resources within and outside of her family and ethnic community on the basis of her disability status. A Jewish American adolescent may experience privilege as a result of being perceived as white but may be the target of anti-Semitic slurs at school and in social media because of their religious beliefs.
    - These examples illustrate how perspectives are shaped by the multiplicity of identities and contexts to which an individual belongs, some oppressed and some privileged. Aspects of identity such as race, gender, and class can be oppressed or privileged, in ways that may differ across contexts, and can result in differing experiences that interact dynamically to shape an individual's experiences, advantages, and disadvantages across time and space. The intersections of

multiple identities transform the oppressed and privileged aspects of each person's layered, interlocking identities

- To address intersectionality in a paper, story, or article, identify individuals' relevant characteristics and group memberships and describe how their characteristics and group memberships intersect in ways that are relevant to the text.
    - For example, ability and/or disability status, age, gender, gender identity, generation, historical as well as ongoing experiences of marginalization, immigrant status, language, national origin, race and/or ethnicity, religion or spirituality, sexual orientation, social class, and socioeconomic status, among other variables

- Report imperative information for each group using specific terms as described in the bias-free language pages on disability, gender, racial and ethnic identity, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.
    - For example, when describing people in terms of their race and gender, write "20 participants were African American women, 15 participants were European American women, 23 participants were African American men, and 18 participants were European American men (all participants were cisgender)" rather than "35 participants were women and 41 were men; 43 were African American and 33 were European American."
    - Reporting peoples' characteristics in this way helps readers understand how many groups there are that are composed of individuals with the same characteristics. Likewise, when reporting and interpreting data, note the impact of any intersections on the findings rather than assuming that one characteristic is responsible for what you found.