

SAY THIS	INSTEAD OF THIS
Person with a disability Accessible Physical disability Person with a learning disability	Disabled, handicapped Crippled Retarded, slow
Native American American Indian Indigenous, First People Inuit Use the specific name of the group if known Maya (person or adjective)	Native Indian Primitive Eskimo Mayan (this is the language)
African American, Black Person of African ancestry Person of color Mixed race, biracial Person of mixed Afro-European ancestry	Colored, Negro Mulatto
Latino or Latina Mexican, Puerto Rican, etc. Mexican American, Cuban American, etc. Spanish speaking Brazilian	Chicano Hispanic
Asian Indian Chinese Japanese Pacific Islander	Oriental
Self-taught artist African Art, Oceanic Art	Outsider Primitive, Naïve
Middle Eastern Egyptian, Iranian, etc. Muslim (person)	Arab Islamic (adjective, but not person)
Woman Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Sexual orientation	Squaw, girl Queer, homosexual Sexual preference
Working Class Middle Class Upper Class	Lower Class, poor Elite, 1%, rich
Irish, Scottish, British etc. European descent, Caucasian	Anglo White
Immigrant	Illegal, Refugee Foreigner

Visitors First: Acknowledging Diversity

The words we use influence how we perpetuate attitudes about groups of people. We want to choose words that convey sensitivity and understanding, not to be “politically correct” but because what we say affects others.

Language of diversity is dynamic and constantly changing. Language changes as groups who have been historically oppressed speak from self-determination. Terms used to describe a group may be descriptive, but generally come from political or geographic designations. When determining how to address a person or speak about an object, take these questions into consideration:

- What do the people in question want to be called?
- What is the most precise term?
- When in doubt: ASK!
- If you are still unsure, use the most appropriate general term. (ex. Native Americans, people of color).

People First Language was created by an advocacy group for people with disabilities. People First Language means choosing kind, accurate words when speaking of this large and diverse group of people. Essentially, it means to put the person before the disability. Additionally, choose words that reflect that a person has something rather than is something. Finally, describe what a person needs rather than what problems they may have.

For example:

She has autism.

He receives special education services.

She is living with dementia.

Instead of:

She is autistic.

He is a special ed child.

She suffers from Alzheimers.