

ACS Inclusivity Style Guide

TIP SHEET Race, ethnicity, and nationality

For more context, review the “[Race, ethnicity, and nationality](#)” section of the Inclusivity Style Guide. Use this tip sheet in combination with the “[General guidelines](#)” tip sheet.

Be specific

Racial and ethnic categories are incredibly broad. Being specific is clearer and avoids homogenizing a diverse group.

Use with care

People of color: Think about what level of specificity is appropriate. If referring to the shared experiences of many people of diverse races and ethnicities who are not White, then this might be appropriate. If not, name the races and ethnicities.

Underrepresented: Use the term only when a comparison exists and only when people are truly underrepresented (for example, in some sciences, not all people of color are underrepresented). Specify what category is underrepresented.

Avoid

BIPOC, BAME, POC: Avoid using the abbreviations “BIPOC” (Black, Indigenous, and people of color), “BAME” (Black, Asian, and minority ethnic), and “POC” (people of color). Be specific when possible.

Brown: Avoid because it has no clear definition. An exception is if someone identifies as Brown and it is important to mention their race.

Minorities, non-White: “Minorities” is often used inaccurately, and both terms have the connotation of being lesser than.

Caucasian: The term was originally used to reinforce inaccurate beliefs in natural racial categorizations. It is not a synonym for “White.”

Know the language

American Indian and Native American: Follow a person’s or group’s preference on which term to use. Use a specific nation’s name when possible.

Asian: Avoid using “Asian” to refer to a specific Asian population, such as East Asian people.

Black and African American: “Black” is a broader term that includes those who aren’t US citizens. Use “Black” if you aren’t sure of someone’s preference.

Hispanic and Latino: Hispanic people are of Spanish-speaking origin, whereas Latino people have a Latin American origin. The terms are not interchangeable, although there is overlap.

Latinx: A gender-neutral alternative to “Latina” or “Latino.” There is a lot of disagreement over use of the word.