



Diversity & Inclusion Style Guide

Inclusive language is free of words, phrases or tones that reflect prejudiced, stereotyped or discriminatory views about a group of people. Use these suggested guidelines when writing for an inclusive audience.



Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
Overview	3
Race & Ethnicity.....	4
Communicating cross-culturally	5
Women/Gender.....	5
All Abilities	5
LGBTQ+.....	6
Military.....	6
Age/Generations.....	7
Imagery guidelines	7
Other communication suggestions.....	7
Sources	8

Overview

At SAS, we're committed to ensuring that everyone feels respected, represented and seen. One way we exemplify this commitment is through the way we communicate with our communities, customers and each other. Words matter, and what we say (and how we say it) is important.

This guide was created to be a brief, non-comprehensive overview of some best practices for communicating with diverse audiences. While it's been reviewed and affirmed by people of varying identities and experiences, it's certainly not exhaustive or reflective of every individual's personal language preferences. If you're in doubt, Google it, respectfully ask a colleague who identifies in the community you're writing about, or ask Danielle Pavliv, who will vet your question with employees.

This is a living document, and it will continue to be reviewed, updated and refined as we listen and learn together. Ongoing review will be conducted by our Employee Inclusion Groups and Diversity and Inclusion council, as well as our D&I team.

To learn more about Diversity and Inclusion at SAS, check out sas.com/diversity or join the conversation on Yammer!

If you have questions or feedback, please reach e-mail Diversity@sas.com.

Race & Ethnicity

When to use racial, ethnic and cultural identities .

You don't need to mention a person's race or ethnicity unless it's relevant to the conversation.

- **Race** – a social construct that encompasses inherited, characteristic traits including skin color, hair color and texture, eye color and shape, facial features, physical build, etc.
- **Ethnicity** – cultural characteristics that define a person as being a member of a specific group such as language, accent, religion, style of dress, hairstyle, social customs, food and dietary preferences.
- **Nationality** – refers to the legal sense of belonging to a specific nation (birthright or naturalized)
- **Multicultural** – relating to several cultural or ethnic groups within a society

Keep these suggestions in mind:

- When referring to someone who is not white, you can say “person of color” or refer to a community of people from various backgrounds as “people of color.” Also abbreviated by “PoC.” People of color includes African American, Native American, Asian American, Latinx, Pacific Islander, and Multiracial.
- Avoid other words such as “minority” or “underprivileged” as they are rooted in inferiority or “ethnic” and instead say “underserved communities” or “underrepresented group” depending on the context.
- When referring to people of color in tech, we typically say: “Students from underrepresented groups such as the Black or Hispanic community often feel excluded in the tech because the lack of representation of people of color.”

When speaking about race and ethnicity, say...

Black – Encompasses all nationalities of Black people from around the diaspora. Includes: Afro-Latinx, Afro-Caribbean, African American, African. Use this term when speaking about Black people as a whole.

- [It's now AP Style](#) to capitalize Black and Indigenous when referring to a racial, ethnic or cultural identity. The term white remains lowercase.

African American – Specifically speaks to American born Black folks who have generational history and roots in the United States, not Africans who have immigrated to the US. Use this term when speaking to the American Black experience from 1619 to present.

- Only hyphenate African-American when using as an adjective (ex: African-American churches).

Hispanic* – Umbrella term for referring to a person whose ethnic origin is in a Spanish-speaking country, as well as residents of citizens of the US with Latin American ancestry, except those from Brazil, which is not a Spanish-speaking country.

Latina/Latino or Latinx** – Umbrella terms for referring to residents or citizens of the United States with Latin American ancestry.

- *Hispanic is more commonly used in the Eastern United States, Latino is more commonly used west of the Mississippi; either are acceptable. Hispanic and Latino are defined as ethnicities, not races. Hispanics/Latinos can be of any race.
- **Latinx is a gender-neutral way to refer to someone of Latin American origin.

Indian, Indian American - Use “Indian” or “person from India” to refer to a person with ancestral ties to India. Use Indian American to refer to a U.S. permanent resident or citizen with ancestral ties to India.

Native American, American Indian – Native American and American Indian are both generally acceptable and can be used interchangeably to refer to indigenous peoples of the United States. Do not use “Indian” as an alternative.

South and East Asian – “Asian” is as broad a term as “European.” In the United States, Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and others are known as South Asians, while Chinese, Japanese Vietnamese and others are known as East Asians. Do not use “Oriental” to describe a person or group.

Biracial – Preferred term for describing a combination of two or more races. Do not use “mixed” as an alternative.

Communicating cross-culturally

Use globally relevant examples. Use situations that people can relate to regardless of their culture, and example names and email addresses that represent diverse ethnicities.

Avoid figurative language, idioms and colloquialisms. These phrases may confuse audiences from other cultures. Ex: “Time is money,” “cold turkey,” “piece of cake,” “ballpark figure,” etc.

Use consistent styles. For example, stick with “click” if that is how you began. Avoid changing to “press” or “hit” later.

Avoid or limit contractions. Some languages don’t use contractions at all, and they can introduce ambiguity, particularly ‘d and ‘s. Use other means to convey a friendly, informal tone.

Use shorter, simpler sentence structures. Limit commas and semicolons and use shorter sentences for easier comprehension by non-native English speakers.

Avoid abbreviations. For example, instead of “app,” say “mobile app.”

Localize spelling when applicable. In certain countries, English words have different spellings. For example, “Organization” is spelled “Organisation” in the United Kingdom. Check out [this overview of British English](#) for additional examples.

Women/Gender

Unless it’s in reference to a specific person or relevant to the topic at hand, avoid gendered pronouns where possible.

For example, instead of “When a writer experiences writer’s block, *she* should...”

Try re-writing the sentence using...

... **only a noun:** “When experiencing writer’s block, *a writer* should...”

... **the plural:** “When *writers* experience writer’s block, *they* should...”

... **singular they:** “When *a writer* experiences writer’s block, *they* should...”

... **the second person:** “When experiencing writer’s block, *you* should...”

... **an imperative:** “When experiencing writer’s block, go for a walk!”

Avoid unnecessary reference to gender, marital status or looks.

For example, if you’re writing about a “female developer,” ask yourself whether you’d call someone else a “male developer” in the same context.

- Women vs. female (female emphasizes the *biology* of a woman vs. the *identity* of a woman)
- When referring to a group of people who identify as women, avoid “females”
- When referring to significant others, use the word “partner” or “spouse” instead of husband or wife

All Abilities

Use person-first language. Addressing a person first, rather than their disability, shows respect. You don’t need to mention a person’s disability at all, unless it’s relevant to the conversation.

Say...

- “Person with a disability” or “Individual with a disability” instead of “Disabled person”
 - Person with an intellectual disability, person with a physical disability, person with a cognitive disability
- “Uses a wheelchair” instead of “wheelchair bound” or “confined to a wheelchair”
- “Visually impaired” instead of “cannot see” or “blind person”
- “Hearing impaired” or “person who is hard of hearing” instead of “deaf person”
- “Person with a mental illness” or “person with a mental health issue” vs. “Crazy person” or “mentally retarded”

When communicating with an Autistic or neurodiverse audience, here a few tips:

- “Neurodiverse” or “neurodivergent” (variation in the human brain) and “neurotypical” (those who do not have atypical neurological patterns or thought behaviors)
- We (SAS brand) say Autism Acceptance vs. Awareness
- Be straightforward and literal.
- There are always exceptions to the rule. Generally, autistic people prefer identity-first language vs. person-first language. “Autistic people” Vs. “people with Autism”
- If possible, ask for feedback to ensure comprehension and clarity.
- Never use offensive images, symbols, or campaigns to represent the Autistic community. Examples include puzzle pieces or campaigns with offensive platforms such as Autism Speaks.
- Review these [10 better phrases to use in job descriptions to be more inclusive of people with physical disabilities](#)

LGBTQ+

We say: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer+ (and Allies)

Say...

- “Identifies as LGBTQ” or “identifies as gay” vs. ‘homosexual’ or “gay man”
- Transgender vs. “Transvestite” or other terms typically perceived as derogatory
 - Trans woman (male to female) or Trans man (female to male)

Respecting an individual's use of pronouns. Be careful about asking others for personal pronouns as this could force individuals whose gender presentation does not match their gender identity to lie or out themselves.

If you are curious about the use of pronouns or how to be respectful about gender identity, check out mypronouns.org.

- You should use the gender pronouns associated with the gender that the individual is transitioning to

Military

When talking about those that are serving in, have served in, or are associated with the military, be sure to use the proper and respectful terms.

Service Member – A member of the “uniformed services” consisting of the five branches of the military, the Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Services. Service members are actively serving in the military full-time or on “active duty.”

- **Soldier** – Members of the Army
- **Sailor** – Members of the Navy
- **Airmen** – Members of the Air Force
- **Coast Guardsmen** – Members of the Coast Guard
- **Marines** – Members of the Marine Corps

Veteran – Any person who has actively served in the military and has since been released under conditions other than dishonorable.

Guardsman or Reservist – Members of the National Guard or Reserves (gender neutral). Guardsman and Reservists are not full-time active duty military personnel, although they can be a Veteran who was previously. Guardsman and

Reservists can be deployed at any time and typically work 1 weekend per month and up to 2 consecutive weeks per year.

Military spouses serve, too! When we talk about the military – or those that are associated with the military – we typically refer to the entire family unit rather than only the individual service member or veteran.

For example, “At SAS, we honor the service and sacrifice of Veterans and military families, and actively support our employees transitioning from the military to the civilian work environment.”

Age/Generations

Age is not indicative of a person’s capabilities, so it should not be referenced unless relevant to the conversation. You should never use age as an adjective when describing a person unless necessary.

- “Older person” vs. “old”
- “Experienced” or “seasoned” when referring to the extent of someone’s experience
- “Less experienced” or “early in career” vs. “young”

Do not say “senior citizen” or “elderly” or refer to employees or other adults who are younger than you as “kid,” “child,” or “youngin.”

It’s also inappropriate to refer to people by generational stereotypes (for example, “Millennial mindset” or “Boomer”) These are assumptions and generalizations about people born during a time period.

Imagery guidelines

The images we choose to pair with our communications are just as important as the words we use. When selecting a photo(s) for any purpose, think carefully about how it may be perceived in context.

For example...

If you’re communicating about inequities in education...

- **Don’t** select only photos of Black students.
- **Do** select photos of students of a varying races, ethnicities and genders

If you’re choosing photos to represent senior executive/leadership personas...

- **Don’t** select photos of only white men
- **Do** select a diverse range of photos featuring varying races, ethnicities, genders and ages.

When selecting images to include with a communication or story, take a moment to run through this mental checklist:

- Is there a risk that this may come across as profiteering or opportunistic?
- Does this content corroborate or strengthen stereotypes?
- Does this content make assumptions about someone’s lifestyle, situation or access to resources?
- Is the tone of this content appropriate in this context?
- Is this imagery aligned with cultural norms present in this region?

Other communication suggestions

- Familiarize yourself with the audience — including demographic information, cultural norms, and available resources. This will show that you have taken the time to understand the circumstances, interests and needs of your audience.
- Remember that gaining your audience’s respect may take time. Do not expect every new audience or member to accept you or your message right away.

- Know what you don't know.
- Sometimes it's difficult to know what to say or how to say it, especially in new or unfamiliar territory. Don't be afraid to admit when you don't know something. Asking politely is far better than assuming or saying something that may be hurtful. Support open dialogue and seek out the appropriate resources that will help you learn more.
 - "I have a question."
 - "Can you help me understand"
- Avoid stereotypes – even ones that you perceive to be positive. These are broad generalizations leading to assumptions about an individual based on a group identity. They could be flattering or hurtful.
- Keep an open mind. Really listen when someone is providing their perspective. You don't have to agree with someone to understand their perspective.
- Have the courage to be uncomfortable. We may not always have the answers, or we may stumble, but help each other learn.
- Use second-person pronouns (you, your, yours, yourself, etc.) when addressing potential candidates in job descriptions.

Sources

- [Diversity Style Guide](#)
- [National Association of Black Journalists](#)
- [American Psychological Association \(APA\)](#)
- [The Writing Cooperative](#)
- [John Graham Jr. LinkedIn Post](#)
- [Ogilvy](#)