

Language and Terminology: An introduction for Teachers

What is racism in school?

- ✓ Racism occurs when a pupil, or teacher, is treated less favorably because of their skin colour, nationality, religion or belief, or culture.

What does it look like?

- ✓ Verbal abuse, online bullying, physical abuse and exclusion from activities.
- ✓ The most common form pupils face is verbal abuse through the use of racist terminology and racial stereotyping.

Why is understanding language and terminology so important?

- ✓ Language is a very powerful method of structuring attitudes.
- ✓ Language and terminology hugely influences how pupils perceive themselves, others and the world around them.
- ✓ Language and terminology can contribute to the creation and perpetuation of racial stereotyping and belief systems.

What can I do to help my students?

- ✓ Develop your own and your pupils awareness of, and sensitivity to, the oppressive and discriminatory potential of language.
- ✓ Ensure students know what is acceptable and unacceptable and why.
- ✓ You must acknowledge **certain language and words are unacceptable regardless of whether or not pupils' intentionally use them to hurt**, the intent behind language doesn't necessary alter the effect words can have.
- ✓ **It is your responsibility to challenge and report all use of racist terminology**, regardless of intent, following the 'responding to and reporting racism' guidelines.

So, what terminology is acceptable and unacceptable?

X	Why?	✓	Why?
Coloured	Historically used in a derogatory way to separate and segregate black people. White people decided this was the word that should be used to describe anybody who was not white, which may imply that to be white is 'normal' or default.	Black	Black is a term that has been chosen by and is used by black people. There are lots of rumours that cause people to feel uncomfortable about saying black, these rumours are untrue and as a descriptive term it is completely acceptable.
Nigger/Nigga	Originated as a term referring to black people as a variation of the Spanish/Portuguese noun negro and descends from the Latin adjective niger meaning 'black'. Historically nigger was used as an intentionally derogatory word as early as the 17th century. It has accompanied the slave trade, innumerable lynchings, castrations, beatings, acts of arson, and other racially motivated attacks against black people. The slave trade alone saw an estimated 22-55 million deaths of black people.	Black	The word black describes a skin colour, not the word nigger. Nigger is a complicated word as hip hop culture has tried to reappropriate it to mean 'friend'. However even when people talk about appropriating the word nigger its history still exists. The word is inextricably linked with violence and brutality on black people's self-worth and physical abuse on black bodies. No amount of appropriating can erase that. Allowing black or white pupils to use this word to describe someone is unacceptable.
Half-Caste	Historically used to describe people of mixed race or ethnicity. It is derived from the Latin <i>castus</i> , meaning pure. In other words half-caste meant a person that was half-pure. In Australia, the term half-caste was widely used in the 19th and 20th century British Commonwealth Laws to refer to the offspring of White Colonists and Aboriginal Natives. Laws stated that the Australian government could seize such children and forcibly remove them from their parents.	Mixed...	'Mixed parentage', 'mixed heritage' and 'mixed race' are acceptable alternatives to describe a person's ethnicity. However, when using 'mixed race', it is important to remember that 'race' is a social construct and there are not different races within humanity.
Gypo / Pikey	Derogatory terms to describe Gypsies or Travellers often used to describe someone who is scruffy, creating negative associations with gypsies. Pikey derives from pike, which meant to 'go away from, to go on' and related to the words turnpike (toll-road) and pike-man (toll-collector).	Gypsy or Traveller	The terms Gypsy, Roma or Traveller may be appropriate but proceed with caution as there are many different Gypsy and Traveller groups.
Paki	During the 1970s and 80s Britain was faced with a wave of racist violence. This included 'Paki-bashing' gangs for whom 'Paki' meant any person who was presumed to be from South Asia or of South Asian descent because of their skin colour. People from different age groups and backgrounds were murdered or physically and verbally attacked.	Pakistani/Asian	Pakistani is the correct term for the nationality of a person from Pakistan. Pak means 'pure' in Urdu and Persian and stan is the Persian word meaning 'place of'. Hence the name Pakistan means land of the pure. The 'i' was added to ease pronunciation. People from an Asian background sometimes refer to themselves as 'brown', which is an acceptable descriptor, along with the term Asian.
Chinky	Chinky (also chink) is an ethnic slur referring primarily to a person of Chinese ethnicity, although it is sometimes used to refer to people of other Asian descent, or to people who have physical features that are characteristic of many Asian people.	Chinese	Chinese is the correct term for the nationality of a person from China. China is the English translation for Zhongguo, believed to have become popular in the mid 19 th century.