

USING INCLUSIVE & BIAS-FREE LANGUAGE

What exactly is inclusive and bias-free language?

ACAP emphasizes the need to talk about all people with inclusivity and respect. Students should use language that is free of bias and avoid perpetuating prejudicial beliefs or demeaning attitudes in their writing.

Being appropriately specific

In scholarly writing, precision is crucial. When referring to a person or persons, use language that is truthful, unambiguous, and free of bias or discriminatory implications, specific and relevant to the writing task. Imprecision can be defined as bias, as well as imprecise or unclear wording.

Examples of being specific

Utilise the guides linked below to ensure the language you use is appropriate for the person or persons you are addressing in your academic writing.

- [Age](#)
- [Disability](#)
- [Gender](#)
- [People who took part in the research](#)
- [Racial or ethnic groups](#)
- [Sexual orientation](#)
- [Socioeconomic status](#)

Be sensitive to labels

It is important to respect the language people use to describe themselves by referring to them by their given names. Accept that language evolves through time and that members of the same group may disagree on the terms they use. Note, however, that some people may use slurs or stigmatising language to refer to themselves.

Acknowledge people's humanity

Be careful to make sure that people's individuality and humanity are maintained. Avoid using adjectives as nouns such as "gays" or "the poor" or terms that equate persons with their illness, for example, "schizophrenics". Instead, use nouns with descriptive phrases or adjectives such as "gay men", "people living in poverty", or "people with schizophrenia".

Adapted from APA Style Bias-free Language: <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/bias-free-language>

Further resources:

- [APA Style Bias-free language guide](#)
- [Inclusive language - Australian Government Style Manual](#)
- [A guide to writing and speaking about Indigenous People in Australia](#)
- [Appropriate terminology for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – it's complicated](#)
- [LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Language Guide](#)
- [Disability Employment Basics - Using inclusive language](#)