

# Race Literacy Glossary

You just look like you've got a tan.  
Do you have hair under your hijab?  
Do people eat insects in your country?  
I just don't see colour.  
I don't think of you as black.

**Call it  
racism.**

**#CallItRacism**

Accountability

In the context of racial equity work, accountability refers to the ways in which individuals and communities hold themselves to their goals and actions, and acknowledge the values and groups to which they are responsible.

To be accountable, one must be visible, with a transparent agenda and process. Accountability demands commitment.

Ally

Someone who makes the commitment and effort to recognise their privilege (based on gender, class, race, sexual identity, etc.) and work in solidarity with oppressed groups in the struggle for justice. Allies understand that it is in their own interest to end all forms of oppression, even those from which they may benefit in concrete ways.

Allies commit to reducing their own complicity or collusion in oppression of those groups and invest in strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression.

Anti-black

Anti-Blackness as being a two-part formation that both voids Blackness of value, while systematically marginalising Black people and their issues. The first form of anti-Blackness is overt racism. Beneath this anti-Black racism is the covert structural and systemic racism which categorically predetermines the socioeconomic status of Blacks in this country. The structure is held in place by anti-Black policies, institutions, and ideologies.

The second form of anti-Blackness is the unethical disregard for anti-Black institutions and policies. This disregard is the product of class, race, and/or gender privilege certain individuals experience due to anti-Black institutions and policies. This form of anti-Blackness is protected by the first form of overt racism.



Anti-Muslim racism/Islamophobia

Anti-Muslim racism is the expression of systemic discrimination against Muslims and those racialised as Muslims. It is the marginalisation of these subjects in daily life through education, policing, border agencies, health, the courts, politics, and countless other areas which touch them.

With a long history, in large part steeped in discourses of Orientalism, anti-Muslim racism (alternatively called “Islamophobia”) can be seen on both the level of the personal and structural. With the personal, we can see it in physical attacks in public, disproportionate referrals to the Prevent scheme, and various prominent cases of bullying and intimidation of Muslims by individuals across the political spectrum.

These individualised accounts of anti-Muslim racism can see echoes in the structural nature of it. While the current political climate displays a more barefaced, hateful sentiment against Muslims (seeing them as the perpetual dangerous outsiders), “liberal” anti-Muslim racism has an equally long history and has shown itself through foreign expeditions (in large part justified on the grounds of Muslims needing Western salvation), wholesale criminalisation through the media, and an aggressive push towards “liberal values” which Muslims always fall short of embodying.

Despite the violent words and acts inflicted upon Muslims on a daily basis, resistance to this is very much alive. Activists across the world have mobilised to combat racist immigration policies, the far-right, mainstream politicians invested in demonising Muslims, and stand in solidarity with the oppressed and listen to them in their struggle.

Anti-racism

Anti-Racism is defined as the work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualised approach, and set up in opposition to individual racist behaviours and impacts.

Anti-racist

An anti-racist is someone who is supporting an anti-racist policy through their actions or expressing anti-racist ideas. This includes the expression of ideas that racial groups are equals and do not need developing, and supporting policies that reduce racial inequity.

SOURCE: Ibram X. Kendi, [How To Be An Antiracist](#), Random House, 2019.



Antisemitism

Antisemitism is the prejudice against or hatred of Jews, and can take the form of physical attacks, the expression of negative stereotypes or the promotion of hostility against Jewish people. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism was adopted by the Scottish Government in June 2017, there are however other definitions and Scottish Colleges and Universities, aware of this diversity, are currently consulting with their own communities to agree local definitions.

Antisemitism can manifest as:

- Celebration, denial, trivialisation or revision of the Holocaust
- Anti-Jewish conspiracy theories about ‘Jewish control’ over politics, the media or finance
- Theological antisemitism
- Crude stereotypes about Jewish physical appearance or relationship to money or power.

Antisemitic behaviour might include:

- Racist abuse – including name-calling or Nazi gestures
- Physical bullying – including violence or intimidation
- Graffiti – on religious or personal property
- Exclusion by peers.

Black Lives Matter

Black Lives Matter is an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise. It is an affirmation of Black folks’ humanity, our contributions to this society, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression.

SOURCE: Black Lives Matter, [“Herstory”](#) (accessed 7 October 2019).

BME/BAME

BME and BAME tend to be used in a lot of British research and policy on race and diversity.

BME stands for Black and Minority Ethnic and it includes people who might face discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, language, religion, tradition and cultural practices.

BAME stands for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic. The addition of the “A” makes sense in the UK considering that people of Asian descent make up a big chunk of the total minority ethnic population. However, as racial categories evolve, who knows which other letters will be pasted onto the acronym.

While both terms are politically correct and officially recognised, there are nonetheless imperfect acronyms.

For example, the word “minority” can be frustrating due to its connotations of weakness and powerlessness. In fact, some groups that constitute a “minority” in certain regions and countries actually constitute a majority in other regions or around the world as a whole – on a global scale, people racialised as white are actually the minority population but they are granted the “majority” status in Scotland.

Moreover, BME and BAME can be problematic because they focus on ethnicity as well as race. That means a white Norwegian person will be considered included in the two acronyms and so will a black Nigerian person – even though their racial experiences will obviously be very dissimilar.

Collusion

A political movement to address systemic and state violence against African Americans. Per the Black Lives Matter organisers: “In 2013, three radical Black organisers—Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi—created a Black-centered political will and movement building project called #BlackLivesMatter. It was in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin’s murderer, George Zimmerman. The project is now a member-led global network of more than 40 chapters. [Black Lives Matter] members organise and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes. Black Lives Matter is an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise. It is an affirmation of Black folks’ humanity, our contributions to this society, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression.”

SOURCE: Black Lives Matter, [“Herstory”](#) (accessed 7 October 2019).

Colonisation

Colonisation can be defined as some form of invasion, dispossession and subjugation of a people. The invasion need not be military; it can begin—or continue—as geographical intrusion in the form of agricultural, urban or industrial encroachments. The result of such incursion is the dispossession of vast amounts of lands from the original inhabitants. This is often legalised after the fact. The long-term result of such massive dispossession is institutionalised inequality. The coloniser/colonised relationship is by nature an unequal one that benefits the coloniser at the expense of the colonised.



## #CallItRacism

Ongoing and legacy colonialism impact power relations in most of the world today. For example, white supremacy as a philosophy was developed largely to justify European colonial exploitation of the Global South (including enslaving African peoples, extracting resources from much of Asia and Latin America, and enshrining cultural norms of whiteness as desirable both in colonising and coloniser nations).

### Critical Race Theory

The Critical Race Theory movement considers many of the same issues that conventional civil rights and ethnic studies take up, but places them in a broader perspective that includes economics, history, and even feelings and the unconscious. Unlike traditional civil rights, which embraces incrementalism and step-by-step progress, critical race theory questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and principles of constitutional law.

SOURCE: Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, [Critical Race Theory: An Introduction](#), NYU Press, 2001 (2nd ed. 2012, 3rd ed. 2017).

### Decolonisation

Decolonisation may be defined as the active resistance against colonial powers, and a shifting of power towards political, economic, educational, cultural, psychic independence and power that originate from a colonised nation's own indigenous culture. This process occurs politically and also applies to personal and societal psychic, cultural, political, agricultural, and educational deconstruction of colonial oppression.

### Discrimination

The unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion and other categories.

### Ethnicity

A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioural patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, and ancestral geographical base.

Examples of different ethnic groups are:

Cape Verdean, Haitian, African American (Black); Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese (Asian); Cherokee, Mohawk, Navaho (Native American); Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican (Latino); Polish, Irish, and Swedish (White).

### Gypsies and Travellers

The term 'Gypsies and Travellers' is difficult to define as it does not constitute a single, homogenous group, but encompasses a range of groups with different histories, cultures and beliefs including: Romany Gypsies, Welsh Gypsies, Scottish Gypsy Travellers and Irish Travellers. There are also Traveller groups which are generally regarded as 'cultural' rather than 'ethnic' Travellers. These include 'New' (Age) Travellers and occupational travellers, such as showmen and waterway travellers.



### Implicit Bias

Also known as unconscious or hidden bias, implicit biases are negative associations that people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically, without conscious awareness. Many studies have indicated that implicit biases affect individuals' attitudes and actions, thus creating real-world implications, even though individuals may not even be aware that those biases exist within themselves. Notably, implicit biases have been shown to trump individuals' stated commitments to equality and fairness, thereby producing behaviour that diverges from the explicit attitudes that many people profess.

### Individual Racism

Individual racism refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism. Individual racism can be deliberate, or the individual may act to perpetuate or support racism without knowing that is what he or she is doing.

Examples:

Telling a racist joke, using a racial epithet, or believing in the inherent superiority of whites over other groups. Avoiding people of colour whom you do not know personally, but not whites whom you do not know personally (e.g., white people crossing the street to avoid a group of Latino/a young people; locking their doors when they see African American families sitting on their doorsteps in a city neighbourhood; or not hiring a person of colour because "something doesn't feel right"). Accepting things as they are (a form of collusion).

### Institutional Racism

Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as people of colour.

Examples:

Government policies that explicitly restricted the ability of people to get loans to buy or improve their homes in neighbourhoods with high concentrations of African Americans (also known as "red-lining"). City sanitation department policies that concentrate trash transfer stations and other environmental hazards disproportionately in communities of colour.

### Internalised Racism

Internalised racism is the situation that occurs in a racist system when a racial group oppressed by racism supports the supremacy and dominance of the dominating group by maintaining or participating in the set of attitudes, behaviours, social structures, and ideologies that undergird the dominating group's power. It involves four essential and interconnected elements:

*Decision-making* - Due to racism, people of colour do not have the ultimate decision-making power over the decisions that control our lives and resources. As a result, on a personal level, we may think white people know more about what needs to be done for us than we do. On an interpersonal level, we may not support each other's authority and power – especially if it is in opposition to the dominating racial group. Structurally, there is a system in place that rewards people of colour who support white supremacy and power and coerces or punishes those who do not.

*Resources* - Resources, broadly defined (e.g. money, time, etc), are unequally in the hands and under the control of white people. Internalised racism is the system in place that makes it difficult for people of colour to get access to resources for our own communities and to control the resources of our community. We learn to believe that serving and using resources for ourselves and our particular community is not serving "everybody."

*Standards* - With internalised racism, the standards for what is appropriate or "normal" that people of colour accept are white people's or Eurocentric standards. We have difficulty naming, communicating and living up to our deepest standards and values, and holding ourselves and each other accountable to them.



*Naming the problem* - There is a system in place that misnames the problem of racism as a problem of or caused by people of colour and blames the disease – emotional, economic, political, etc. – on people of colour. With internalised racism, people of colour might, for example, believe we are more violent than white people and not consider state-sanctioned political violence or the hidden or privatised violence of white people and the systems they put in place and support.

SOURCE: Donna Bivens, [Internalized Racism: A Definition](#) (Women's Theological Center, 1995).

### Interpersonal Racism

Interpersonal racism occurs between individuals. Once we bring our private beliefs into our interaction with others, racism is now in the interpersonal realm.

Examples:

Public expressions of racial prejudice, hate, bias, and bigotry between individuals

### Microaggression

The everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalised group membership.

SOURCE: Derald Wing Sue, PhD, ["Microaggressions: More than Just Race"](#) (Psychology Today, 17 November 2010).

### Oppression

"The systematic subjugation of one social group by a more powerful social group for the social, economic, and political benefit of the more powerful social group. Rita Hardiman and Bailey Jackson state that oppression exists when the following 4 conditions are found:





“The oppressor group has the power to define reality for themselves and others, the target groups take in and internalise the negative messages about them and end up cooperating with the oppressors (thinking and acting like them), genocide, harassment, and discrimination are systematic and institutionalised, so that individuals are not necessary to keep it going, and members of both the oppressor and target groups are socialised to play their roles as normal and correct. Oppression = Power + Prejudice.”

SOURCE: “[What Is Racism?](#)”

**People of Colour**

Often the preferred collective term for referring to non-White racial groups. Racial justice advocates have been using the term “people of colour” (not to be confused with the pejorative “coloured people”) since the late 1970s as an inclusive and unifying frame across different racial groups that are not White, to address racial inequities. While “people of colour” can be a politically useful term, and describes people with their own attributes (as opposed to what they are not, e.g., “non-White”), it is also important whenever possible to identify people through their own racial/ethnic group, as each has its own distinct experience and meaning and may be more appropriate.

**Prejudice**

A pre-judgment or unjustifiable, and usually negative, attitude of one type of individual or groups toward another group and its members. Such negative attitudes are typically based on unsupported generalisations (or stereotypes) that deny the right of individual members of certain groups to be recognised and treated as individuals with individual characteristics.

**Race**

Racial categorisation schemes were invented by scientists to support worldviews that viewed some groups of people as superior and some as inferior. Race is a made-up social construct, and not an actual biological fact.

SOURCE: 1–2. PBS, “[Race: The Power of an Illusion](#)” (2018–2019 relaunch of [2003 series](#)).

**Racism**

Racism = race prejudice + social and institutional power  
Racism = a system of advantage based on race  
Racism = a system of oppression based on race  
Racism = a white supremacy system

Racism is different from racial prejudice, hatred, or discrimination. Racism involves one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of the society and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices.

SOURCE: “[What Is Racism?](#)”

**Racist**

One who is supporting a racist policy through their actions or interaction or expressing a racist idea.

SOURCE: Ibram X. Kendi, [How To Be An Antiracist](#), Random House, 2019.

**White Fragility**

A state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable [for white people], triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviours such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviours, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium.

SOURCE: Robin DiAngelo, “[White Fragility](#)” (*International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, 2011).

**White Privilege**

1. Refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white. Generally white people who experience such privilege do so without being conscious of it.
2. *Structural White Privilege*: A system of white domination that creates and maintains belief systems that make current racial advantages and disadvantages seem normal. The system includes powerful incentives for maintaining white privilege and its consequences, and powerful negative consequences for trying to interrupt white privilege or reduce its consequences in meaningful ways. The system includes internal and external manifestations at the individual, interpersonal, cultural and institutional levels.

The accumulated and interrelated advantages and disadvantages of white privilege that are reflected in racial/ethnic inequities in life-expectancy and other health outcomes, income and wealth, and other outcomes, in part through different access to opportunities and resources. These differences are maintained in part by denying that these advantages and disadvantages exist at the structural, institutional, cultural, interpersonal, and individual levels and by refusing to redress them or eliminate the systems, policies, practices, cultural norms, and other behaviours and assumptions that maintain them.

*Interpersonal White Privilege*: Behaviour between people that consciously or unconsciously reflects white superiority or entitlement.

*Cultural White Privilege*: A set of dominant cultural assumptions about what is good, normal or appropriate that reflects Western European white world views and dismisses or demonises other world views.

*Institutional White Privilege*: Policies, practices and behaviours of institutions—such as schools, banks, non-profits or the judiciary systems—that have the effect of maintaining or increasing accumulated advantages for those groups currently defined as white, and maintaining or increasing disadvantages for those racial or ethnic groups not defined as white. The ability of institutions to survive and thrive even when their policies, practices and behaviours maintain, expand or fail to redress accumulated disadvantages and/or inequitable outcomes for people of colour.

SOURCES:  
Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women Studies” (1988).  
Transforming White Privilege: A 21st Century Leadership Capacity, CAPD, MP Associates, World Trust Educational Services (2012).

**White Supremacy**

The idea (ideology) that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people are superior to People of Colour and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions. While most people associate white supremacy with extremist groups like the Ku Klux Klan and the neo-Nazis, white supremacy is ever present in our institutional and cultural assumptions that assign value, morality, goodness, and humanity to the white group while casting people and communities of colour as worthless (worth less), immoral, bad, and inhuman and “undeserving.” Drawing from critical race theory, the term “white supremacy” also refers to a political or socio-economic system where white people enjoy structural advantage and rights that other racial and ethnic groups do not, both at a collective and an individual level.

SOURCE: “[What Is Racism?](#)”

**Whiteness**

The term white, referring to people, was created by Virginia slave owners and colonial rules in the 17th century. It replaced terms like Christian and Englishman to distinguish European colonists from Africans and indigenous peoples. European colonial powers established whiteness as a legal concept after Bacon’s Rebellion in 1676, during which indentured servants of European and African descent had united against the colonial elite. The legal distinction of white separated the servant class on the basis of skin colour and continental origin. The creation of ‘whiteness’ meant giving privileges to some, while denying them to others with the justification of biological and social inferiority.

Whiteness itself refers to the specific dimensions of racism that serve to elevate white people over people of colour. This definition counters the dominant representation of racism in mainstream education as isolated in discrete behaviours that some individuals may or may not demonstrate, and goes beyond naming specific privileges (McIntosh, 1988). Whites are theorised as actively shaped, affected, defined, and elevated through their racialisation and the individual and collective consciousness formed within it ... Whiteness is thus conceptualised as a constellation of processes and practices rather than as a discrete entity (i.e. skin colour alone). Whiteness is dynamic, relational, and operating at all times and on myriad levels. These processes and practices include basic rights, values, beliefs, perspectives, and experiences purported to be commonly shared by all but which are actually only consistently afforded to white people.

SOURCE:  
1. PBS, “[Race: The Power of an Illusion](#)” (2018–2019 relaunch of [2003 series](#)).  
2. Robin DiAngelo, “[White Fragility](#)” (*International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, 2011).

**As definitions and meanings can change over time, please use ‘[The Anti-Racist Educator](#)’ glossary and [Race Equity Tools](#) for the latest updates.**

Space for your logo here

**Offensive questions, stereotypes and ‘jokes’ have a lasting impact on individuals, affecting their mental health, career progression and overall welfare at college or university.**

It's time to stop sweeping these microaggressions under the rug.  
Call racism out for what it is and challenge unacceptable behaviour.

It's time to take a stand.

Space for your call to action  
and contact details

**#CallItRacism**

**Call it racism | Challenge racist behaviour | Change racist structures**