

Alternative Words to Correct Biased-sounding Writing Tone

Your business writing can produce a biased-sounding tone by using certain words or phrases. To communicate respect and professionalism, consider the following alternative words in your business writing.

Gender-related

INSTEAD OF:

Salesman

Chairman

Manpower

Male nurse, Female doctor

Gendered pronouns

(he, him, she, her)

TRY THIS:

Sales representative

Chairperson

Workforce, workers

Nurse, Doctor (or physician)

1. Drop the pronoun.

*EXAMPLE: The journalist should not insert **her** bias into the article.*

2. Use plural instead.

*EXAMPLE: Journalists should not insert **their** bias into the article.*

3. Rephrase the sentence

*EXAMPLE: Original: Before the lawyer can go to trial, **he** needs to review the case.*

Revised: Before going to trial, the lawyer needs to review the case.

Race/Ethnicity-related

INSTEAD OF:

Using a person's race

(African American, Asian...)

TRY THIS:

1. Don't use it in your writing unless relevant.

*EXAMPLE: Census data shows decline in **white** population.*

EXAMPLE: The author is an ~~intelligent black male~~ technology expert.

2. Use preferred term of specific race or ethnicity.

*EXAMPLE: Native Americans may prefer specific group, such as **Cherokee. Hodi. or Kickapoo.** etc.*

Alternative Words to Correct Biased-sounding Writing Tone

Continued

Sexual Orientation¹

INSTEAD OF:

Homosexual
Sexual preference
Homosexual lifestyle

TRY THIS:

Gay, gay person, gay couple, lesbian
Sexual orientation
Gay lives, gay and lesbian lives

Disability-related²

INSTEAD OF:

Disabled person

Handicapped

TRY THIS:

Place the person/individual first

EXAMPLE: Person with a disability
Person with a disability

¹ GLAAD Media Reference Guide - Terms to Avoid, <https://www.glaad.org/reference/offensive>

² National Disability Authority, Appropriate Terms to Use
<http://nda.ie/Publications/Attitudes/Appropriate-Terms-to-Use-about-Disability/>