National Labor Relations Board

Inclusive Writing Guide

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I. Introduction

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB or Agency) is an independent federal agency created in 1935 and vested with the power to safeguard employees' rights to organize, engage with one another to seek better working conditions, choose whether or not to have a collective-bargaining representative negotiate on their behalf with their employer, or refrain from doing so.

The NLRB's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) program is responsible for developing and implementing standards for assessing Agency policies and practices to ensure that diversity and inclusion are leveraged in all facets of the Agency's work. In furtherance of the Agency's DEIA efforts, the Chairman and the General Counsel, in coordination with the NLRB's Chief Diversity Officer (CDO), initiated discussions to assist our workforce and the public in writing on matters related to protected classes under law. The result of those discussions is this guide to writing in a manner that is most respectful to the identities of all individuals involved in the Agency's written work product.

Agency employees should follow this guide in all internal and external writing relating to case handling, administrative matters, and other Agency communications, subject to the need to comply with any contrary court rules. Members of the public are encouraged to use this guide as a resource in drafting submissions and communications to the Agency.

This style guide will be updated to reflect evolving best practices. We also note this guide applies to writing and communicating about people who live in the United States.

II. Definitions and Suggestions for Respectful Communication

This section is intended to offer thoughtful and practical guidance to foster an environment of respectful communication in all written communications. Generally, it is recommended to respect the language people use to describe themselves, meaning refer to people as they refer to themselves. At the same time, this guide recognizes that words and phrases should not be altered in certain contexts. In particular, except as described below in the section on slurs and epithets, the text of affidavits, transcripts, and other documents that quote someone's exact language should not be altered based on these recommendations.

Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a person with a disability as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. This includes people who have a record of such an impairment, even if they do not currently have a disability. It also includes individuals who do not have a disability but are regarded as having a disability.

When writing about disability, either person-first language (e.g., "a person with

paraplegia" rather than "a paraplegic") or identity-first language (e.g., "an autistic person" rather than "a person with autism") may be acceptable. But, whenever possible, try to determine and follow the preference of the person or group you are writing about.

Autism - Autism Spectrum Disorder (abbreviated as ASD) is a developmental disorder, sometimes called a neurodevelopmental disorder, and should never be referred to as a mental illness or a disease. Use the terms *characteristics* or *traits*, instead of *symptoms*, when referring to people on the autism spectrum.

Disability vs. handicap - Use *disability* instead of *handicap.*

Disability-related metaphors - Avoid using disability as a metaphor, which perpetuates negative and disempowering views of people with disabilities. Below are some disability-related metaphors and their alternatives:
- Blind to/deaf to → willfully ignorant, deliberately ignoring
- Crazy/schizophrenic/spaz → wild, confusing, unpredictable
- Lame → boring, uninteresting, monotonous, uncool
- OCD → fastidious, meticulous, hyper-focused
- Cripples the service → slows down the service
- Sanity-check → check for completeness and clarity

Needs, differences vs. deficit, defect - In general, do not use terms like *deficit, defect, abnormality, or problem* when talking about people or their mental health. Instead, use *needs, differences,* or *challenges.* However, it is acceptable to use these terms when referencing medical diagnoses like *breathing problems.* Also, the term *disability* is acceptable, as is more specific language (e.g., *intellectual disability, physical disability, language disability,* etc.).

Nondisabled person, person without disabilities vs. normal - Avoid false hierarchies. When comparing persons with disabilities to others, use the term *nondisabled person* or *person without disabilities* rather than *normal* person, because *normal* is associated with *abnormal,* and it is stigmatizing to imply that an individual with a disability is "abnormal." When referring to someone without intellectual disabilities, use *without [disorder],* or *neurotypical* instead of *normal.*

Person with disabilities vs. handicapped - Use *person with disabilities* or *disabled person (to describe the person)* instead of general terms such as *handicapped, handi-capable, differently abled,* or *the disabled.*

Person who uses a wheelchair vs. wheelchair bound - Use *person who uses a wheelchair* or *wheelchair user* rather than *wheelchair-bound* or *confined to a wheelchair.* Assistive technologies and services should be portrayed as helping and accommodating a person rather than making them "correct" or emphasizing limitation.

Race and National Origin

When writing about race and national origin, avoid using *Black* and *White* as standalone nouns. For example, instead of *Blacks*, use *Black people*. Capitalize all references to race (e.g., Asian American, Black, Latino, Native American, White).

Avoid collective reference to racial and ethnic minority groups as *non-White* unless quoting a formal category in a database or research document. Instead, indicate the specific groups.

Avoid using *race/ethnicity* because the slash implies that these are interchangeable terms. Instead use *race and ethnicity* or *race or ethnicity*, as appropriate.

Include context when writing about race and other people-related language. Populations should be described specifically whenever possible, and do not default to using *minorities* or *racial and ethnic groups* when really talking about specific populations.

If race is relevant to a matter, ask the person you are speaking with what term(s) to use whenever possible.

Essentialism (the view that categories of people have intrinsically different and characteristic natures or dispositions) is strongly discouraged and is broadly considered inappropriate. For example, phrases such as "the Black race" and "the White race" are essentialist in nature, portray human groups monolithically, and often perpetuate stereotypes.

American Indian or Alaska Native - Individuals with origins in any of the original peoples of North, Central, and South America, including, for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation of Montana, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, Aztec, and Maya. Whenever possible, specify the nation or people (e.g., Navajo, Cherokee, Inuit) instead of using the more general term. In the United States, the collective terms "Native American" and "Native North American" are acceptable (and may be preferred to "American Indian"). The abbreviation *AI/AN* stands for American Indian / Alaska Native and is often used in reference to Tribal affairs.

Asian, Asian American - Individuals with origins in any of the original peoples of Central or East Asia, Southeast Asia, or South Asia, including, for example, Chinese, Asian Indian, Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean, and Japanese. Use specific terms whenever possible. If race is pertinent to the story, ask the source what term(s) to use whenever possible. Generally dual-heritage terms are not hyphenated but may be based on personal preference. *AAPI*, which stands for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, is an acronym widely used by people within these communities but may not be familiar to others; spell out the full term and define when used in quotations.

When writing about people of Asian ancestry from Asia, the term "Asian" is appropriate;

for people of Asian descent from the United States or Canada, the appropriate term is "Asian American" or "Asian Canadian," respectively. It is inappropriate to group "Asian" and "Asian American" as if they are synonymous. This usage reinforces the idea that Asian Americans are perpetual foreigners. The older term "Oriental" is primarily used to refer to cultural objects such as carpets and is pejorative when used to refer to people. It is often useful to divide "Asian origin" regionally to provide more specificity. For example, consider using terms like South Asia (including most of India and countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal), Southeast Asia (including the eastern parts of India and countries such as Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines), and East Asia (including countries such as China, Vietnam, Japan, South Korea, North Korea, and Taiwan). However, while corresponding identifiers (e.g., East Asian) may be used, references to the specific nation or region of origin should be used when possible.

Biracial, multiracial, mixed, or mixed race – A person who has parents or ancestors of different racial backgrounds. Some consider using *mixed* alone to be stigmatizing, while others claim the term positively. The term *Mixed race* can also be considered stigmatizing. If it is relevant to a matter, ask the person you are speaking with what term(s) to use whenever possible.

Black and African American - An African American is a person whose origins are in any of the Black racial groups of Africa. Black is broader and more inclusive than African American – someone could be born in Jamaica and live in the U.S. and identify as Black but not African American.

When writing about people of African ancestry, several factors inform the appropriate terms to use. *African American* might refer to American people of African ancestry; however, African American and Black are not always interchangeable; African American refers to the ethnicity, whereas Black is a racial group/category. People of African descent have widely varied cultural backgrounds, family histories, and family experiences. Some will be from Caribbean islands, Latin America, various regions in the United States, countries in Africa, or elsewhere. Some American people of African ancestry prefer "Black," and others prefer "African American"; both terms are acceptable. However, "African American" should not be used as an umbrella term for people of African ancestry worldwide because it obscures other ethnicities or national origins, such as Nigerian, Kenyan, Jamaican, or Bahamian. In these cases, use "Black" or, if appropriate, use specific national-origin terms, such as *Haitian* or *Nigerian*. The term *Afro-Latine* (and related terms ending in -Latino, -Latina, or -Latinx) refers to individuals in Latin America or of Latin American descent who are also of African ancestry. The terms "Negro," "colored," and "Afro-American" are outdated, and their use is generally inappropriate unless part of a quote or other historical citation.

Chicano or Chicana - The terms Chicano or Chicana may be used to refer to someone of Mexican descent born in the United States if someone self-identifies as such. Though it is sometimes used as a synonym for Mexican American, the terms Chicano or Chicana may be more specifically used (1) to refer to the Mexican American civil rights movement

of the 1960s; (2) by or to refer to people of Mexican descent from the American Southwest; or (3) by or to refer to Mexican Americans to emphasize their pride in their Amerindian roots and/or dual identities as both Mexicans and Americans.

Historically, the terms Chicano and Chicana were originally derogatory, but they were reclaimed in response to discrimination against Mexican Americans working under unfair labor and social conditions. Chicano/a is a chosen identity that refers to Mexican Americans in the U.S. Southwest; however, not all Mexican Americans identify as Chicano/a; therefore, only use it if someone self-identifies as such.

Hispanic - A person descended from Spanish-speaking populations. People who identify their origin as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be of any race. Note that "Hispanic" is not necessarily an all-encompassing term, and the labels "Hispanic" and "Latino" have different connotations. The term "Latino" (and its related forms) might be preferred by those originating from Latin America, including Brazil. Some use the word "Hispanic" to refer to those who speak Spanish; however, not every group in Latin America speaks Spanish (e.g., in Brazil, the official language is Portuguese).

Latino/a, Latinx, Latine - A person whose origins are in Latin America, including Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico, South America, or Central America. The word "Latino" is gendered (i.e., "Latino" is masculine, and "Latina" is feminine). The plural Latinas is for a group of women, and Latinos is for a group of men. A mixed-gender group of Latin American descent, however, would revert to the masculine *Latinos*. Latinx and Latine are gender-neutral terms or nonbinary terms inclusive of all genders and may be preferred by some people.

Indigenous peoples, First peoples, First Nations, Aboriginal peoples, and Native peoples - These terms refer to people with origins in the earliest known inhabitants of an area, in contrast to groups that have settled, occupied, or colonized the area more recently in human history. These terms may be useful to describe Indigenous people in a global context.

When writing about Indigenous Peoples, use the names that they call themselves. In general, refer to an Indigenous group as a "people" or "nation" rather than as a "tribe." In the United States, the collective terms "Native American" and "Native North American" are acceptable (and may be preferred to "American Indian"). "Indian" usually refers to people from India. Hawaiian Natives may identify as "Native American," "Hawaiian Native," "Indigenous Peoples of the Hawaiian Islands," and/or "Pacific Islander."

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander - Individuals with origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands, including, for example, Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, Tongan, Fijian, and Marshallese. See also: Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI).

Middle Eastern, Middle Eastern or North African (MENA), Arab American, Persian - MENA can be defined as including individuals with origins in any of the original peoples

of the Middle East or North Africa, including, for example, Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Iraqi, and Israeli. However, individuals with this descent may also identify in a variety of ways. Allowing individuals to self-identify is best. State the nation of origin (*e.g.*, Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Lebanon, Israel) when possible. In some cases, people of MENA descent who claim Arab ancestry and reside in the United States may identify as Arab Americans. People of Iranian descent may identify as Persian.

Person of color - A person of color, commonly abbreviated as "POC," is someone who is not White or of European origin. Many prefer this term to *racial minorities* and consider it inclusive of all non-White races, while some individuals with non-White identities may not relate to the term. Still others consider it euphemistic or irrelevant. Do not use *people of color* when referring to one specific racial group who doesn't identify as White; use a term specific to that group.

To refer to non-White racial and ethnic groups collectively, use terms such as "people of color" or "underrepresented groups" rather than "minorities." The use of "minority" may be viewed pejoratively because it is usually equated with being less than, oppressed, or deficient in comparison with the majority (i.e., White people). Rather, a *minority group* is a population subgroup with ethnic, racial, social, religious, or other characteristics different from those of the majority of the population. If a distinction is needed between the dominant racial group and nondominant racial groups, use a modifier (e.g., "ethnic," "racial") when using the word "minority" (e.g., ethnic minority, racial minority, racial-ethnic minority). When possible, use the specific name of the group or groups to which you are referring.

The term "underprivileged" is not interchangeable with "person of color" or "marginalized groups."

Tribe, Tribal - Always capitalize the word Tribe or Tribal, even when not referring to a specific Tribe. It is recommended to follow the precedent of the U.S. Department of the Interior and other federal agencies and capitalize Tribal in all instances, even when used as a common noun.

White - OMB defines White as individuals with origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, including, for example, English, German, Irish, Italian, Polish, and Scottish.

Religion

When writing about religion, please be mindful that:
- A person's religion should not be cited unless it is material.
- Many people fall into more than one religious category at the same time.
- Avoid blanket or stereotypical depictions of individuals, groups, or nationalities.
- Do not assume that because someone lives in a specific country, region, or territory that they practice the dominant religion of that area.

When religion is material and you are writing about it, be aware:

- Words can mean different things and vary within different communities.
- Avoid labels such as extremist, militant, radical, or fundamentalist. They are offensive.
- Always capitalize Christian, Muslim, Hindu, etc. but do not substitute for a precise name of a denomination or subgroup, if applicable. When possible, be specific and use the terms that individuals use for themselves.
- Avoid using the terms cult and sect, which have negative connotations. Consider the phrase new religious movement to describe groups outside the mainstream.
- Denomination may be used for some Christian churches, such as Protestant churches.
- Avoid terms such as devout and pious to describe religious communities and individuals; these terms are subjective and lack precise meaning to all readers. Use practicing or observant. Ask the individual how they describe themselves.
- Avoid the term Islamist. We do not speak of "Christianists" or "Judaists." The term Islamist should never be used to describe Muslims. Instead of "Islamist," use the specific name of the political group, movement, or institution you are referring to and explain who they are and what they represent.
- Avoid the term Moonies to describe Unification Church members.
- Avoid the term proselytize, which can have negative connotations. Ask people what they are doing and use their words.
- Sharia refers to the body of laws based on Islamic jurisprudence. Avoid the phrase Sharia law, which is redundant.
- Lowercase "skullcap" is the preferred generic term for a small religious headpiece known as the Jewish kippa, Catholic zucchetto, or Muslim kufi. Avoid yarmulke, which is a Yiddish term used mostly in the United States, unless the person wearing it refers to it in that way.
- Capitalize Vodou as the correct spelling for an Afro-Caribbean religious tradition with roots in Africa and Haiti; do not use the term voodoo.

Sex, Gender, and Sexuality

Below are some terms for reference:

Cisgender - Cisgender refers to an individual whose gender identity corresponds to the sex assigned to them at birth (i.e., the sex listed on an original birth certificate). This can be shortened to cis. In writing you can refer to someone as a cisgender female or a cisgender male. This can be shortened to cis female or cis male.

Gender expression - Gender expression refers to how an individual indicates their gender to others through their behavior, appearance, and other characteristics that are culturally associated with a particular gender identity, such as names, titles, pronouns, clothing, hairstyles, voice, grooming, mannerisms, etc.

Gender identity - Gender identity is an individual's internal sense of being male, female, or an identity other than exclusively male or female. It is a core element of a person's

individual identity. Gender identity is not contingent on any social, legal, or medical changes an individual may make to align their gender expression with their gender identity.

Gender nonconforming - Gender nonconforming is a broad term that refers to individuals who do not appear, behave, or identify themselves in conformity with gender norms, stereotypes, or expectations, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into commonly used categories.

Gender transition - Gender transition refers to the process by which an individual aligns components of their gender expression with their gender identity. This may, but need not, involve such steps as dressing differently, changing hairstyles or other grooming practices, and/or using a different name. Gender transition also may, but need not, involve medical steps such as gender-affirming hormone therapy and/or surgery.

Intersex - Intersex describes an individual whose sex traits do not all correspond to a single sex. Individuals with intersex traits also may describe themselves as having differences in sex development (DSD).

LGBTQIA+ - LGBTQIA+ is an acronym often used as an umbrella term referring to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex individuals. The "+" stands for "plus," which recognizes additional sexual orientations and gender identities that are not explicitly identified in the acronym.

Nonbinary - Nonbinary describes an individual who does not identify exclusively as male or female. Nonbinary individuals may prefer pronouns other than the traditional male and female pronouns. Individuals who do not identify exclusively as male or female may describe their identities by using terms in addition to, or other than, nonbinary, such as agender, bigender, gender-fluid, and/or genderqueer.

Sexual orientation - Sexual orientation is a person's physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to other people. Sexual orientation is distinct from gender identity, which relates to an individual's internal sense of self. For example, transgender individuals (like any individuals) may identify as asexual, bisexual, gay, heterosexual, lesbian, pansexual, queer, questioning, same-gender loving, or two-spirit (a term that also may describe an individual's gender and/or spiritual identity).

Transgender - Transgender refers to an individual whose gender identity and/or expression is different from the sex assigned to them at birth (i.e., the sex listed on an original birth certificate). For example, a transgender woman was assigned the male sex at birth but identifies as female. Similarly, a transgender man was assigned the female sex at birth but identifies as male. A transgender woman or transgender man may identify as a woman or a man, respectively, without using "transgender" as a modifier. A person does not need to undergo any medical procedure to be considered a transgender woman or a transgender man. This can be shortened to trans. Similarly, this can be shortened to trans woman or trans man. It is important to note that you would not refer to someone as a

transwoman or transman (omitting the space).

Two Spirit - Two Spirit is a person who identifies as having both a masculine and a feminine spirit and is used by some Indigenous people to describe their sexual, gender, and/or spiritual identity. Traditionally, Native American two-spirit people were male, female, and sometimes individuals with intersex traits who combined activities of both men and women, with traits unique to their status as two-spirit people; they occupied a distinct, alternative gender status. Various spellings of Two Spirit exist, including uppercase, lowercase, and hyphenated or with a number (e.g., 2Spirit, Two Spirit, two-spirit). *2S* is the most common abbreviation; however, Two Spirit is most frequently used.

Introduction to Pronouns

Almost everyone has personal gender pronouns such as he/him/his, she/her/hers, or they/them/ their. People do not have "preferred" pronouns. Rather, they have "correct pronouns" or "chosen pronouns" or just simply "pronouns." Only use personal gender pronouns for a person that that person has indicated are correct. A person's gender pronouns will not always correspond to the sex they were assigned at birth because gender identity is an internal characteristic that should never be assumed. To avoid confusion, the best practice is to ask someone what pronouns they use.

Using pronouns in your writing

Singular they/them pronouns - As mentioned above, in addition to the binary English pronouns *she/her* and *he/his*, some people may use *they/them* as their personal gender pronouns. Singular they/them pronouns have been in use in the English language since at least the 14th century. When using they/them pronouns, conjugate the verb as a plural. *Are* is the present-tense verb for the singular pronoun *they,* just as *are* is the present-tense verb for the singular pronoun *you.* For example: "Mason began working for the employer in 2017. Since 2017, they have worked in the same job classification."

Singular they/them pronouns may be used in any document no matter the context, even if the document involved protected concerted activity. This includes generic third-person usage of pronouns such as in legal standards or for people who use they/them pronouns as their personal gender pronouns. Additionally, singular they/them pronouns may be used in a sentence that has multiple other subjects, but care must be taken to ensure reader clarity.

However, care must be taken to avoid using plural they/them pronouns when drafting sentences that include people who use singular they/them pronouns. This will never involve simply omitting all uses of singular they/them pronouns. This follows from the same drafting convention by which the same personal gender pronouns (such as he/him or she/her) are not used for multiple subjects in the same sentence to avoid reader confusion.

People who use multiple pronouns - Some people use more than one pronoun as their

personal gender pronouns, such as he/they, she/they, or he/she/they. If a person has not indicated that all of their pronouns should be used interchangeably, you may use any pronoun that the person has explicitly stated that they use. Some people who use multiple pronouns may prefer one of those pronouns over the others, and if the person has explicitly conveyed this you should try to primarily use that preferred pronoun. (Please note: this is the only acceptable usage of the term "preferred pronoun.") However, although rare, some people do wish to be referred to by multiple pronouns interchangeably. This can be done in your writing but requires exceptional care to ensure clarity for your audience.

Neopronouns - In addition to he/him, she/her, and they/them, some people chose to use neopronouns as their personal gender pronouns. Neopronouns include personal gender pronouns such as ze/zir/zem, xem/xem, ey/em, and ve/ver. Although the exclusive use of neopronouns is not common, there are at least two dozen different neopronouns used by people today. Neopronouns date back to the late 18th century in the English Language, with ze/zir first being used in at least 1864. Some people who use neopronouns also use another more traditional gender pronoun such as he/him, she/her, or they/them. However, if someone indicates that they use neopronouns exclusively, those neopronouns should be the only ones used for that person. Example: Jordan first began discussing organizing a union with zir coworkers in March. By June, Jordan took the employees' organizing efforts public and told management that ze was the lead organizing and management could respond directly to zem with its response to employees' demand for recognition.

Some people use no pronouns - There are some people who do not wish to be associated with any personal gender pronouns. In this case, you should only use the person's name to refer to them.
Example: Jane filed a grievance against Jane's employer after being suspended. Four weeks later, Jane contacted the union to inquire about the current status of that grievance. Note that this is the only instance where all pronouns should be omitted in our writing.

Honorifics - We use honorifics, such as Ms., Mrs., Mr., Mx. (pronounced Mix), and Dr. as a sign of respect for people we are not overly familiar with, but using the wrong honorific is disrespectful. Many nonbinary people use the Mx honorific, but this is not universal. Similarly, Mx. is not a default gender neutral honorific to use when you don't know someone's honorific, nor can it be used as a plural honorific for multiple people. When in doubt, you can use phrases such as:

- Dear Charging Party
- Dear Charged Party
- Dear [first name] [last name]
- Dear Parties & Party Representatives
- Dear Counsel
- To Whom It May Concern

- If correspondence is going to multiple individuals in a case, use "Parties & Party Representatives" or "To Whom it May Concern" instead of "Sir or Madam"

Corresponding to honorifics, we use phrases such as Ma'am or Sir to signify that we are treating people in a respectful manner, but using the wrong phrase to refer to someone is misgendering. It's best not to use any phrase if you are not certain.

Gendered Language - Gendered language should be avoided in written work product. Please see the below chart examples of gendered language and potential substitutions:

Instead of…	Consider…
Ladies and Gentlemen	Colleagues
Boys and Girls	Everyone
You Guys	Team
Woman/Man	Person or Individual
Mailman	Letter Carrier
Waitress	Server
Stewardess	Flight Attendant

Deadnaming - Deadnaming is the act of referring to a transgender or nonbinary person by a name they used prior to transitioning. If someone indicates that a certain name is the name they used before a gender transition, you should never use that name to refer to the person (as that would be deadnaming them), unless they specifically ask you to in a certain context. If the name they used prior to transitioning appears in documents or if others refer to them using that name, you can explain in a footnote.

III. Documenting Slurs and Epithets Related to Title VII/ADA Protected Categories

A slur is an insulting or disparaging remark or innuendo. An epithet is used to describe a person, place, or thing and is usually a disparaging or abusive word or phrase used to

demean, insult, and/or infer that a person or group is inferior. The Agency recognizes that, as of the writing of this guide, existing Agency documents, including but not limited to case handling reports, briefs, decisions, and internal documents such as security report incidents, have reproduced slurs and epithets related to Title VII/ADA protected categories (race; color; religion; sex [including pregnancy, childbirth, and related conditions, sexual orientation, and gender identity]; national origin or disability), particularly in stating the facts of a case or reciting the testimony of a witness. While it is important to accurately state facts and present testimony in any case, this guide is intended to establish a new and more thoughtful Agencywide approach to documenting slurs and epithets based on Title VII/ADA protected categories.

Thus, Agency employees will follow the guidance below:

In most written work, if quoting a slur or epithet related to a Title VII/ADA protected category, use only the first letter of the word, followed by "-word," and include a short parenthetical describing the slur. For example, instead of writing the slur directed towards a Black person/ people or an African American(s), state "n-word" (an offensive slur for Black/African American people), Similarly; instead of writing the slur directed towards an LGBTQIA+ individual(s), state "f-word (an offensive slur for LGBTQIA+ people)"; and instead of writing the slur directed towards individuals with disabilities, state "r-word (an offensive slur for individuals with disabilities)".

For formal public case documents (briefs, decisions, opinions, etc.), there is an interest in shining a light on a slur or epithet that is material to the outcome of the case, but there is also interest in avoiding unnecessary repetition of the slur or epithet. To strike an appropriate balance between those interests in formal public case documents, a slur or epithet may be fully reproduced in the text the first time it appears in a document if it is material, but any subsequent references to the slur or epithet should be abbreviated as described above regarding other written work. This guidance applies regardless of whether the slur or epithet is embedded in a direct quotation of witness testimony or a document. For purposes of this guidance, a separate opinion in a Board decision will be considered a separate document. It is also acceptable to abbreviate all references to the slur or epithet (i.e., without fully reproducing the slur or epithet the first time it appears).

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