

6 questions to help you detect potentially problematic language + 5 thought-provoking resources

Language is one of the most basic means by which we communicate, making it incredibly powerful in shaping our thoughts, behaviors, and actions. Since language is used as a basis for all communication, it plays an immense power in every aspect of society including race relations, politics, international development, criminology, mental health and many more.

What are the origins of the words I'm using?

[Redefining The Word: Examining a Racial Slur Entrenched in American Vernacular That is More Prevalent than Ever](#)

[Language and Empire: The Vision of Nebrija](#)

What are my preconceived biases of labels that categorize an individual or a group - are these biases applicable to all members of that group?

Is the vocabulary I am using de facto placing me in a superior position over people of other nations, races, mental, and/or physical capabilities?

[Talking about "Tribe": Moving from Stereotypes to Analysis](#)

[Language as the "Ultimate Weapon" in Nineteen Eighty-Four](#)

Does the language used in media reports about a person match the stereotype usually attributed to everyone that shares that person's race or ethnicity?

Am I making a judgment or decision about someone solely based on his/her/their accent?

[Why The Language of Mass Murder Matters](#)

During criminal reporting, would public figures and the media use different vocabulary to refer to the crime and criminal if he/she/they were of any other race?



LensShift is committed to addressing misguided social impact work and misguided perceptions. We do so by facilitating learning, critical reflection and discourse on social change. Learn more at lensshift.org.