

Below is the full umbrella race-related coverage entry. The parts in yellow are new or notably revised from previous guidance.

race-related coverage Reporting and writing about issues involving race calls for thoughtful consideration, precise language, and an openness to discussions with others of diverse backgrounds about how to frame coverage or what language is most appropriate, accurate and fair. Avoid broad generalizations and labels; race and ethnicity are one part of a person's identity. Identifying people by race and reporting on actions that have to do with race often go beyond simple style questions, challenging journalists to think broadly about racial issues before having to make decisions on specific situations and stories.

Some guidelines:

race Consider carefully when deciding whether to identify people by race. Often, it is an irrelevant factor and drawing unnecessary attention to someone's race or ethnicity can be interpreted as bigotry. There are, however, occasions when race is pertinent:

- In stories that involve significant, groundbreaking or historic events, such as being elected U.S. president, being named to the U.S. Supreme Court or other notable occurrences. *Barack Obama was the first black U.S. president. Sonia Sotomayor is the first Hispanic justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Jeremy Lin is the first American-born NBA player of Chinese or Taiwanese descent.*
- In cases where suspects or missing persons are being sought, and the descriptions provided are detailed and not solely racial. *Police are looking for a man described as white, about 6 feet tall and 200 pounds, with black hair and blue eyes, wearing a plaid shirt and a Seattle Mariners baseball cap.* Such descriptions apply for all races. The racial reference should be removed when the individual is apprehended or found.
- When reporting a demonstration, disturbance or other conflict involving race (including verbal conflicts), or issues like civil rights.

In other situations when race is an issue, use news judgment. Include racial or ethnic details only when they are clearly relevant and that relevance is explicit in the story.

Do not use a derogatory term except in rare circumstances -- when it is crucial to the story or the understanding of a news event. Flag the contents in an editor's note.

racist, racism Racism is a doctrine asserting racial differences in character, intelligence, etc., and the superiority of one race over another, or racial discrimination or feelings of hatred or bigotry toward people of another race. The terms *racism* and *racist* can be used in broad references or in quotations to describe the hatred of a race, or assertion of the superiority of one race over others. *The townspeople saw their votes as a rejection of racism.* Deciding whether a specific statement, action, policy, etc., should be termed racist often is not clearcut. Such decisions should include discussion with colleagues and/or others from diverse backgrounds and perspectives. In the AP, that conversation should also include senior managers.

Begin by assessing the facts: Does the statement or action meet the definition of racism? That assessment need not involve examining the motivation of the person who spoke or acted, which is a separate issue that may not be related to how the statement or action itself can be characterized.

In general, avoid using *racist* or any other label as a noun for a person; it's far harder to match the complexity of a person to a definition or label than it is a statement or action. Instead, be specific in describing the person's words or actions. Again, discuss with senior managers, colleagues and others from diverse backgrounds when the description may be appropriate for a person.

Do not use *racially charged* or similar terms as euphemisms for *racist* or *racism* when the latter terms are truly applicable.

Cases in which the term *racist* might be used include identifying as *racist* support for avowed racist organizations, statements calling another race or ethnic group inferior, or employing negative stereotypes for different racial or ethnic groups. *The video shows the candidate wearing blackface and making racist statements including, "You're not white so you can't be right."*

Always use specifics to describe the words or actions in question. But do not use a derogatory term except in rare circumstances when it is crucial to the story or the understanding of a news event.

If *racist* is not the appropriate term, give careful thought to how best to describe the situation. Alternatives include *racially divisive*, *racially sensitive*, or in some cases, simply *racial*. For details, see **racially charged**, **racially motivated**, **racially tinged**, and other entries in **race-related coverage**.

racially charged, racially motivated, racially tinged Generally avoid using these vague phrases to describe situations in which race is or is alleged or perceived to be a central issue, but that do not meet the definition of *racist* or *racism*. As alternatives, *racially divisive* or *racially sensitive* may be clearer, depending on the context. In some cases, the term *racial* is appropriate: *racial arguments, racial tensions*. Always give specifics about what was done, said or alleged.

Do not use *racially charged*, *racially divisive*, *racially tinged* or similar terms as euphemisms for *racist* or *racism* when the latter terms are truly applicable. *Mississippi has a history of racist lynchings, not a history of racially motivated lynchings. He is charged in the racist massacre of nine people at a black church, not the racially motivated massacre of nine people at a black church.*

black(s), white(s) (n.) Do not use either term as a singular noun. For plurals, phrasing such as *black people, white people, black teachers, white students* is often preferable when clearly relevant. *Black officers account for 47 percent of the police force and white officers nearly 43 percent. The gunman targeted black churchgoers.* The plural nouns *blacks* and *whites* are generally acceptable when clearly relevant and needed for reasons of space or sentence construction. *He helped integrate dance halls among blacks, whites, Latinos and Asian Americans.* **Black** and **white** are acceptable as adjectives when relevant.

black (adj.) Acceptable as an adjective. *African American* is acceptable for an American black person of African descent. (Use *Negro* or *colored* only in names of organizations or in rare quotations when essential.)

boy, girl Generally acceptable to describe males or females younger than 18. While it is always inaccurate to call people under 18 men or women and people 18 and older boys or girls, be aware of nuances and unintentional implications. Referring to black males of any age and in any context as boys, for instance, can be perceived as demeaning and call to mind historical language used by some to address black men. Be specific about ages if possible, or refer to black youths, child, teen or similar.

dual heritage No hyphen (a change in 2019 from previous style) for terms such as *African American*, *Asian American* and *Filipino American*, used when relevant to refer to an American person's heritage. The terms are less common when used to describe non-Americans, but may be used when relevant: *Turkish German* for a German of Turkish descent.

African American No hyphen (a change in 2019 for this and other dual heritage terms). Acceptable for an American black person of African descent.

The terms are not necessarily interchangeable. Americans of Caribbean heritage, for example, generally refer to themselves as *Caribbean American*. Follow a person's preference.

Asian American No hyphen (a change in 2019 for this and other dual heritage terms). Acceptable for an American of Asian descent. When possible, refer to a person's country of origin or follow the person's preference. For example: *Filipino American* or *Indian American*.

Caucasian Avoid as a synonym for *white*, unless in a quotation.

people of color, racial minority The terms *people of color* and *racial minority/minorities* are generally acceptable terms to describe people of races other than *white* in the United States. Avoid using *POC*. When talking about just one group, be specific: *Chinese Americans* or *members of the Seminole Indian Tribe of Florida*, for example. Be mindful that some Native Americans say the terms *people of color* and *racial minority* fall short by not encompassing their sovereign status. Avoid referring to an individual as a *minority* unless in a quotation.

biracial, multiracial Acceptable, when clearly relevant, to describe people with more than one racial heritage. Usually more useful when describing large, diverse groups of people than individuals. Avoid *mixed-race*, which can carry negative connotations, unless a story subject prefers the term. Be specific if possible, and then use biracial for people of two heritages or multiracial for those of two or more on subsequent references if needed. Examples: *She has an African American father and a white mother* instead of *She is biracial*. But: *The study of biracial people showed a split in support along gender lines*. *Multiracial* can encompass people of any combination of races.

transracial The term should not be used to describe people who have adopted a different racial identity.

Chicano A term that Mexican Americans in the U.S. Southwest sometimes use to describe their heritage. Use only if it is a person's preference.

Latino, Latina *Latino* is often the preferred noun or adjective for a person from, or whose ancestors were from, a Spanish-speaking land or culture or from Latin America. *Latina* is the feminine form. Some prefer the recently coined gender-neutral term *Latinx*, which should be confined to quotations, names of organizations or descriptions of individuals who request it and should be accompanied by a short explanation. *Hernandez prefers the gender-neutral term Latinx*. For groups of females, use the plural *Latinas*; for groups of males or of mixed gender, use the plural *Latinos*. *Hispanics* is also generally acceptable for those in the U.S. Use a more specific identification when possible, such as *Cuban*, *Puerto Rican*, *Brazilian* or *Mexican American*.

Hispanic A person from -- or whose ancestors were from -- a Spanish-speaking land or culture. *Latino*, *Latina* or *Latinx* are sometimes preferred. Follow the person's preference. Use a more specific identification when possible, such as *Cuban*, *Puerto Rican* or *Mexican American*.

American Indians, Native Americans Both are acceptable terms in general references for those in the U.S. when referring to two or more people of different tribal affiliations. For individuals, use the name of the tribe; if that information is not immediately available, try to obtain it. *He is a Navajo commissioner*. *She is a member of the Nisqually Indian Tribe*. *He is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma*. Some tribes and tribal nations use *member*; others use *citizen*. If in doubt, use *citizen*. Avoid words such as *wampum*, *warpath*, *powwow*, *teepee*, *brave*, *squaw*, etc., which can be disparaging and offensive. In Alaska, the indigenous groups are collectively known as *Alaska Natives*.

First Nation is the preferred term for native tribes in Canada.

Indian is used to describe the peoples and cultures of the South Asian nation of India. Do not use the term as a shorthand for *American Indians*.

tribe Refers to a sovereign political entity, communities sharing a common ancestry, culture or language, and a social group of linked families who may be part of an ethnic group. Capitalize the word *tribe* when part of a formal name of sovereign political entities, or communities sharing a common ancestry, culture or language. Identify tribes by the political identity specified by the tribe, nation or community: *the Apache Tribe of Oklahoma*, *the Cherokee Nation*. The term *ethnic group* is preferred when referring to ethnicity or ethnic violence.

Orient, Oriental Do not use when referring to East Asian nations and their peoples. Asian is the acceptable term for an inhabitant of those regions.

Indigenous A term used to refer to original inhabitants of a place. *Aboriginal leaders welcomed a new era of indigenous relations in Australia. Bolivia's indigenous peoples represent some 62 percent of the population.* See other entries in **race-related coverage**.

Aborigine An outdated term referring to aboriginal people in Australia. It is considered offensive by some and should be avoided.

ghetto, ghettos Do not use indiscriminately as a synonym for the sections of cities inhabited by minorities or poor people. *Ghetto* has a connotation that government decree has forced people to live in a certain area. In most cases, *section, district, slum area* or *quarter* is the more accurate word.

reverse discrimination A term sometimes used to describe bias or perceived bias against majority groups. Limit its use to quotes; generally just *discrimination* will suffice to describe such allegations or practices.

See the online edition for the full entries with more detail:

Percent, percentage, percentage points: Effective today, we now use the % sign when paired with a numeral, with no space, in most cases: *Average hourly pay rose 3.1% from a year ago; her mortgage rate is 4.75%; about 60% of Americans agreed; he won 56.2% of the vote.* Use figures: *1%, 4 percentage points.*

In casual uses, use words rather than figures and numbers: *She said he has a zero percent chance of winning.* See the full entry, which also cautions against confusing **percent** with **percentage points**, for more detail.

Accent marks and other diacritical marks: We now use accent marks or other diacritical marks with names of people who request them or are widely known to use them, or if quoting directly in a language that uses them: *An immigration officer asked an innocuous question: "Cómo estás?" How are you?*

Important note: We do not expect nor want you to ask everyone you interview whether they use an accent mark (or other mark) in their name. People who spell their names with an accent mark can tell you that, just as they provide the rest of the spelling.

Other than as described above, we do not use these marks in English-language stories. La Nina is still La Nina. Also, FYI: Many AP customers' computer systems will not receive diacritical marks published by the AP.

A new **casualties** entry says to avoid using the word, which is vague and can refer to either injuries or deaths. Instead, be specific about what is meant. If authorities use the term, press for specifics. If specifics aren't available, say so: *Officer Riya Kumar said the crash resulted in casualties, but she did not know whether those were injuries or deaths.*

A new **suspect** entry says the word refers to a person who police, prosecutors or other authorities believe or say committed a crime. Do not use it to mean a person of unknown identity who definitely committed a crime. In other words, don't substitute *suspect* for *robber, killer, rapist, etc.*, in describing an event, even if authorities phrase it that way. Correct: *Police said the robber stole 14 diamond rings; the thief ran away.* Incorrect: *Police said the suspect stole 14 diamond rings; the suspect ran away.* Conversely, don't substitute *robber, killer, rapist, etc.*, when *suspect* is indeed the correct word. Correct: *Police arrested the suspect the next day.* Incorrect: *Police arrested the robber the next day.*

Revised guidance says the word **data** generally should take a singular verb and pronoun: *The data is; It says*

The **cocktail** entry now says not to use the word in any reference to a mixture of drugs. That means don't say *cocktail of execution drugs*, or *HIV cocktail*. Instead: *drug combination* or simply *drugs* or *medications*: HIV drugs.

In the **quotations in the news** entry, we've changed previous guidance and now say NOT to use *sic* in stories to show incorrect usage or spelling by others. Also, we added guidance to avoid parenthetical clarifications in quotes. If such a clarification is needed, it's almost always better to paraphrase. If the quote is essential, include the unclear word or phrase before the parenthetical clarification; deleting it creates questions in a reader's mind.

In the **Dr.** entry, we removed the allowance for *Dr.* to be used on first reference before the names of individuals who hold other types of doctoral degrees, if appropriate in the context.

In the punctuation chapter, we've expanded the **hyphens** entry with more detail and explanation on when to use hyphens, and when not to use them.

Some points:

- No hyphen is needed if the modifier is commonly recognized as one phrase, and if the meaning is clear and unambiguous without the hyphen. Examples include *third grade teacher, chocolate chip cookie, early morning traffic, special effects embellishment, climate change report, public land management, first quarter touchdown, real estate transaction.*

- NOTE: Two of those examples reflect style changes effective today. It's now *third grade teacher*, *student*, etc., without the hyphen. And it's *first quarter touchdown*, *third quarter score*, etc.
- Do use hyphen if it's needed to make the meaning clear and avoid unintended meanings: *small-business owner*, *better-qualified candidate*, *little-known song*, *French-speaking people*, *free-thinking philosophy*, *loose-knit group*. (Think of the different possible meanings or confusion if the hyphen is removed in each of those examples.)
- If the sheer number of hyphens in a phrase, or confusion about how to use them, can daunt either the writer or the reader, try rephrasing. *It's a guide about how to use hyphens wisely*, not *it's a how-to-use-hyphens-wisely guide*.
- **A change effective today:** Many combinations that are hyphenated before a noun are not hyphenated when they occur after a noun: *She works full time*. *She is well aware of the consequences*. *The children are soft spoken*. *The play is second rate*. *The calendar is up to date*. (Previously, the Stylebook said to hyphenate following a form of the verb *to be*.)
- Do use a hyphen after a form of *to be* if confusion could otherwise result, especially with longer compound modifiers or those that are not as commonly used: *The steel surface should be blast-cleaned*. *The technology is state-of-the-art*. *The test was multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank*. *He will work arm-in-arm with the director*.

Speaking of hyphens: In keeping with standard usage, we now say **not to use a hyphen with double-e combinations**.

Examples: *preeclampsia*, *preelection*, *preeminent*, *preempt*, *preestablished*, *preexisting*; *reelect*, *reemerge*, *reemphasize*, *reemploy*, *reenact*, *reengage*, *reenlist*, *reenter*, *reequip*, *reestablish*, *reexamine*.

And: it's now ***passerby* and *passersby***, without the hyphen.

Turning to **verbs**: We have reversed our previous guidance that said to avoid "awkward constructions" that split infinitive forms of a verb (*to leave*, *to help*, etc.) or compound forms (*had left*, *are found out*, etc.). Now we say: In many cases, splitting the infinitive or compound forms of a verb is necessary to convey meaning and make a sentence easy to read. Such constructions are acceptable.

We've clarified guidance on **quasi possessives**: Use an apostrophe when the quantity precedes a noun: *a day's pay*, *two weeks' vacation*, *five years' probation*. But no apostrophe when the quantity precedes an adjective: *six months pregnant*, *three weeks overdue*, *11 years old*.

In composition titles, we now say not to use quote marks around the names such software titles as *WordPerfect* or *Windows*; apps; or around names of video, online or analog versions of games: *FarmVille*, *Pokemon Go*, *The Legend of Zelda*, *Monopoly*.