



Supplemental Material: Writing Clearly and Concisely

General Guidelines for Reducing Bias

Problematic

Preferred

Guideline 1: Describe at the appropriate level of specificity

The client's behavior was typically female.

The client's behavior was [specify].

Comment: Being specific avoids stereotypic bias.

Guideline 2: Be sensitive to labels

Participants were 300 Orientals.

There were 300 Asian participants; among these, 150 were from Southeast Asia (Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam) and 150 from East Asia (North and South Korea).

Comment: Orientals is considered pejorative; use Asian, or be more specific.

the elderly

older people

Comment: Use adjectives as adjectives instead of as nouns.

girls and men

women and men

Comment: Use parallel terms; girls is correct if females of high school age or younger are meant.

Guideline 3: Acknowledge participation

The participants were run.

The subjects completed the trial.

Comment: The passive voice suggests that individuals are acted on instead of being actors.

Guidelines for Unbiased Language (continued)

| Problematic | Preferred |
|---|--|
| Gender | |
| 1. The client is usually the best judge of the value of his counseling. | The client is usually the best judge of the value of counseling. The client is usually the best judge of his or her counseling. Clients are usually the best judges of the value of the counseling they receive. The best judge of the value of counseling is usually the client. |
| 2. man, mankind | people, humanity, human beings, humankind, human species |
| man a project | staff a project, hire personnel, employ staff |
| man-machine interface | user-system interface, person-system interface, human-computer interface |
| manpower | workforce, personnel, workers, human resources |
| man's search for knowledge | the search for knowledge |
| 3. males, females | men, women, boys, girls, adults, children, adolescents |
| 4. same sex, opposite sex | same sex, other sex |
| <i>Comment:</i> Specific nouns reduce the possibility of stereotypic bias and often clarify discussion. Use <i>male</i> and <i>female</i> as adjectives where appropriate and relevant (<i>female experimenter, male participant</i>). <i>Males</i> and <i>females</i> may be appropriate when the age range is quite broad or ambiguous. Avoid unparallel usage such as 10 <i>men</i> and 16 <i>females</i> . Avoid consistently placing socially dominant groups first (e.g., <i>men</i> and <i>women</i> , <i>Whites</i> and <i>racial minorities</i>). | |
| 5. Research scientists often neglect their wives and children. | Research scientists often neglect their spouses and children. |
| <i>Comment:</i> Alternative wording acknowledges that women as well as men are research scientists. | |
| 6. woman doctor, lady lawyer, male nurse, woman driver | doctor or physician, lawyer, nurse, driver |
| <i>Comment:</i> Specify sex only if it is a variable or if sex designation is necessary to the discussion ("13 female doctors and 22 male doctors"). <i>Woman</i> and <i>lady</i> are nouns; <i>female</i> is the adjective counterpart to <i>male</i> . | |
| 7. mothering | parenting, nurturing [or specify exact behavior] |
| 8. chairman (of an academic department) | chairperson, chair [use <i>chairman</i> only if it is known that the institution has established that form as an official title] |
| <i>Comment:</i> <i>Department head</i> may be appropriate; however, the term is not synonymous with <i>chair</i> and <i>chairperson</i> at all institutions. | |
| chairman (presiding officer of a committee or meeting) | chairperson, chair, moderator, discussion leader |
| <i>Comment:</i> In parliamentary usage, <i>chairman</i> is the official term and should not be changed. Alternatives are acceptable in most writing. | |

Guidelines for Unbiased Language (continued)

| Problematic | Preferred |
|--|---|
| 9. foreman, mailman, salesmanship | supervisor or superintendent, postal worker or letter carrier, selling ability |
| <i>Comment:</i> Substitute preferred noun. | |
| 10. The authors acknowledge the assistance of Mrs. John Smith. | The authors acknowledge the assistance of Jane Smith. |
| <i>Comment:</i> Use given names. | |
| 11. cautious men and timid women | cautious women and men, cautious people timid men and women, timid people |
| <i>Comment:</i> Some adjectives, depending on whether the person described is a woman or a man, connote bias. The examples illustrate some common usages that may not always convey exact meaning, especially when paired, as in the first column. | |
| 12. Participants were 16 men and 4 women. The women were housewives. | The men were [specify], and the women were [specify]. |
| <i>Comment:</i> Describe women and men in parallel terms, or omit description of both. Do not use <i>housewife</i> to identify occupation, a term that indicates sex and marital status and excludes men. Use <i>homemaker</i> , which can denote a man. | |
| Sexual orientation | |
| 1. The sample consisted of 200 adolescent homosexuals. | The sample consisted of 200 gay male adolescents. The sample consisted of 100 gay male and 100 lesbian female adolescents. |
| <i>Comment:</i> Avoid use of <i>homosexual</i> and specify gender of participants. | |
| 2. Manuscript title: "Gay Relationships in the 1990s" | "Gay Male Relationships in the 1990s" "Lesbian Female and Gay Male Relationships in the 1990s" |
| <i>Comment:</i> Specify gender equitably. | |
| 3. Participants were asked about their homosexuality. | Participants were asked about the experience of being a lesbian woman or a gay man. |
| <i>Comment:</i> Avoid the label <i>homosexuality</i> . | |
| 4. The women reported lesbian sexual fantasies. | The women reported female–female sexual fantasies. |
| <i>Comment:</i> Avoid confusing lesbian orientation with specific sexual behaviors. | |
| 5. It was the participants' sex, not their sexual orientation, that affected number of friendships. | It was the participants' gender, not their sexual orientation, that affected number of friendships. |
| <i>Comment:</i> Avoid confusing biological sex with gender role. | |
| 6. participants who had engaged in sexual intercourse | participants who had engaged in penile–vaginal intercourse participants who had engaged in sexual intercourse or had sex with another person |
| <i>Comment:</i> The first preferred example specifies kind of sexual activity, if penile–vaginal intercourse is what is meant. The second avoids the assumption of heterosexual orientation if sexual experiences with others is what is meant. | |

Guidelines for Unbiased Language (continued)

Problematic

Preferred

7. Ten participants were married, and five were single. Ten participants were married and living together, four were unmarried and living with partners, and one was unmarried and living alone.

Comment: The preferred example increases specificity and acknowledges that legal marriage is only one form of committed relationship. Marital status is sometimes not a reliable indicator of cohabitation (e.g., married couples may be separated), sexual activity, or sexual orientation.

Racial and ethnic identity

1. The sample included 400 undergraduate participants. The sample of 400 undergraduates included 250 White students (125 women and 125 men) and 150 Black students (75 women and 75 men).

Comment: Human samples should be fully described with respect to gender, age, and, when relevant to the study, race or ethnicity. Where appropriate, additional information should be presented (generation, linguistic background, socioeconomic status, national origin, sexual orientation, special interest group membership, etc.). Note that *African American* currently may be preferred.

2. The 50 American Indians represented. . . . The 50 American Indians (25 Choctaw, 15 Hopi, and 10 Seminole) represented. . . .

Comment: When appropriate, authors should identify American Indian groups by specific group or nation; when the broader designation is appropriate, note that *Native American* may be preferred to *American Indian*. In general, American Indian, African, and other groups prefer *people* or *nation* to *tribe*.

3. We studied Eskimos We studied Inuit from Canada and Aleuts

Comment: Native peoples of northern Canada, Alaska, eastern Siberia, and Greenland may prefer *Inuk* (*Inuit* for plural) to *Eskimo*. Alaska Natives include many groups in addition to Eskimos. *First Nations* may be used when the broader designation is appropriate.

4. Table entries:

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------|----|----|--|------------------|----|----|--|
| Race | | | | Race | | | |
| White | 21 | 15 | | White | 21 | 15 | |
| Non-White | 15 | 4 | | African American | 10 | 1 | |
| | | | | Asian | 5 | 3 | |

Comment: *Non-White* implies a standard of comparison and is imprecise.

5. the articulate Mexican American professor the Mexican American professor

Comment: Qualifying adjectives may imply that the “articulate” Mexican American professor is an exception to the norm (for Mexican American professors). Depending on the context of the sentence, ethnic identity may not be relevant and therefore should not be mentioned.

Disabilities

1. *Put people first, not their disability*

| | |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| disabled person | person with (who has) a disability |
| defective child | child with a congenital disability |
| | child with a birth impairment |
| mentally ill person | person with mental illness |

Comment: Preferred expressions avoid the implication that the person as a whole is disabled.