

Hate Speech
Addressed:
The **N-** word



Pre-Reading
Reflection
Step 1 Please
complete Part 1: 'Pre-
Education'
Reflection' linked
[HERE](#) before moving
on to the next slides.



Language

Language is one tool that reinforces systems that discriminate against, harm and oppress groups of people.

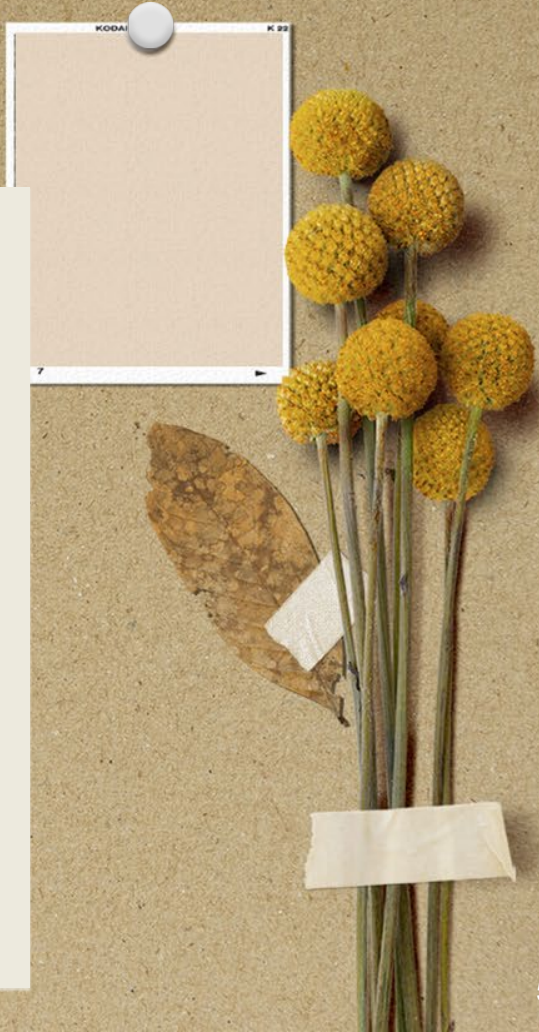
Slurs are harmful language designed to degrade targeted individuals and groups. One such slur is the N-word. Dating back to seventeenth -century colonial America, this slur is directed at Black people and has been used over time to justify disrespect, discrimination and violence.

What The N - Word Feels Like



1600's

Beginning in the early 1600s, senseless logic was used to justify the institution of U.S. chattel slavery, or the treatment of enslaved Black people as property. This logic included ideas that Black people were not human and therefore belonged in captivity. Ensuring that the U.S. bought into this racist idea would allow white Americans to profit off the stolen, free, forced labor of enslaved Black people. This inhumane system was the basis for the early U.S. economy. As enslaved Black people generated billions of dollars in wealth for white people in the U.S., they received no compensation and were subjected to constant and brutal violence. The legacy of slavery perpetuates the racial wealth gap we see today.



Loss of one's Identity

Kidnapped from Africa, enslaved Black people were often stripped of their native language and names. While “new” names were sometimes given by enslavers, the N -word was frequently used to call or refer to enslaved Black people. This word was also used by white Americans who did not “own” enslaved Black people. The N-word was used to communicate that Black people were inferior and undeserving of basic human dignity and respect. While enslaved Black people resisted their oppression in many ways, doing so was extremely dangerous and could result in various kinds of “punishment” including lashings, lynching and being sold away from family.

THE N-WORD
THE N-WORD
THE N-WORD
"DOUBLE STANDARD"
"DOUBLE STANDARD"
"DOUBLE STANDARD"
"DOUBLE STANDARD"



The N-
Word
"Double
Standard"

Anti-Black Racism

Anti-Black racism was reinforced in laws, education, media and politics.

Following Emancipation, or the freeing of Black people from enslavement after hundreds of years, Black people continued to be seen as subhuman and were denied equal access to resources and humane treatment. The N -word continued to be used broadly for decades and was a socially acceptable term among mainstream society in the U.S.

While most people in the U.S. now reject the use of the N -word and recognize its harm, there are several current examples of its use to talk about or attack Black people. **For most Black people, the N -word invokes immense trauma, pain and grief** . Use of the word perpetuates a violent history and reinforces anti-Black racism, a system that marginalizes and oppresses Black people.

Reappropriation

It is important to note that throughout history, groups that have been targeted with oppressive language have, at times, decided to reappropriate, or adopt and shift, the meaning of slurs. The act of reappropriating words that were once used to cause widespread harm is a way that targeted groups sometimes choose to take back the power that is lost when outside groups define them in harmful ways. One example of this is the reappropriation of the N -word by the Black community. After centuries of mistreatment, *many people in the Black community decided to take back the slur, change the spelling and adopt an alternate definition to signify kinship* . Not all members of the Black community choose to use the word in this way or support this act of reappropriation. **Each individual Black person can decide whether they want to use the reappropriated term.**

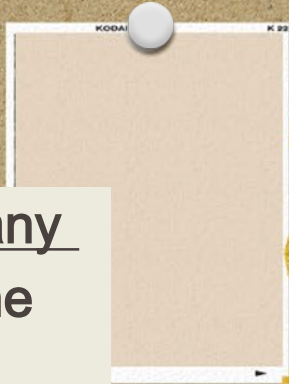
I Am Not a Label



Use of the 'N-word'

Non-Black people should never use the N -word in any context, period—regardless of whether they are in the presence of a Black person or not.

This means that non-Black people should never repeat the word if stated by someone else, use the word when singing along to a song with the N -word in it, or read it out loud when in writing. When non-Black people use the N-word unchecked among other non-Black people, they normalize the term among themselves, communicating that the N -word is acceptable.



**A perspective
from a Black
author...**



“To be fair, I hate the N- word and avoid using it because the N- word has always been a pejorative, a word designed to remind black people of their place, a word to reinforce a perception of inferiority. I have no interest in using the word to describe myself or any person of color, under any circumstance.”

— Roxane Gay, Black Author



Post-Reading Reflection

Step 3 Please
complete **Part 3:**
'Follow Up
Questions' return to
same link: [HERE](#) to
complete today's
work.



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