

**College of Natural Science  
DEI Office**

<b>Instead of</b>	<b>Use</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Guys/Girls, ladies and gentlemen	People/folks/y'all	Avoiding gendered language.
Addict	Person with a substance abuse disorder	Person-first language instead of focusing on disability
Retard (n)/retarded (adj)	Person with a cognitive disability (n), uncool (adj)	These are outdated medical terms that have become slurs against neurodivergent people.
Gay (adj)	Uncool	Denotes being homosexual with negativity.
Grandfather/grandfathered	Legacy/legacy status	Terms have racist connotations to Jim Crow era voting rights.
Insane, crazy	Wild/surprising	Avoids ableist language.
Handicapped	Accessible	Avoids ableist language.
Spaz	Clumsy/awkward	Avoids ableist language.
No can do	I can't do it	Originally was used to make fun of non-English speakers
Peanut gallery	Critics	Avoids racist terminology referring to the upper balcony where Blacks sat in segregated theaters during Jim Crow
Gypsy	Romani people, Traveler, nomad, wanderer	Racial slur for Romani people
Powwow	Gathering	Avoids appropriation of Native American terms
Low hanging fruit	Easy, easily accessible	Associated with lynching
Master	Primary/main	De-associates it with slavery.
Slave (programming)	Secondary	De-associates it with slavery.
Sold down the river	Let down/misled	De-associates it with slavery.
Blacklist	Denylist/blocklist	Avoids associating black with negative
Shoot them a message	Send them a message	Lesser focus on violent words within sentence
Bullet point	Listing	Lesser focus on violent words within sentence
Trigger warning	Content warning	Lesser focus on violent words within sentence
Pulled the trigger	Activated	Lesser focus on violent words within sentence
Moving target	Moving goalpost moving object, moving plan, ever-changing situation	Lesser focus on violent words within sentence
Shoot your shot	Make an attempt	Lesser focus on violent words within sentence
Triggered	Activated, bothered	Lesser focus on violent words within sentence
Bite the bullet	Do the hard thing	Lesser focus on violent words within sentence

Terms and explanations adapted from:

Stanford University "Elimination of Harmful Language Initiative."

Kulkarni, N. (2020, September 11<sup>th</sup>), *Say this instead: Words and Phrases to stop using*, Idealist,

<https://www.idealists.org/en/careers/words-and-phrases-to-stop-using>.

*Inclusive Language in the Workplace*, Writer.com <https://writer.com/guides/inclusive-language/>

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**Learn more:**

- [It's Time To Stop Even Casually Misusing Disability Words](#)
- [Say This Instead | Words and Phrases to Stop Using](#)
- [Want To Prevent Communication Gaffes? Stop Using These 11 Offensive Terms](#)
- [The Diversity Style Guide](#)
- [Inclusive Language in the Workplace](#)

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*Inclusive Language in the Workplace*, Writer.com <https://writer.com/guides/inclusive-language/>

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