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INTRODUCTION

THE LANGUAGE OF DIVERSITY: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION ABOUT RACE AND ETHNICITY

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Most teachers can give examples of “a great class discussion.” That’s often when we feel at our best. We asked the right questions. Students participated without any prodding. They used information and terms we helped them learn. And we felt a type of civic pride that comes from people exercising freedom of speech and making their voices heard. Diversity is definitely one of those topics which can lead to “a great class discussion.” But talking about diversity in the classroom can be challenging. This LEXICON is here to help.

PERSONAL + FACTUAL + CONTROVERSIAL = CHALLENGING

UNDERSTANDING WHAT DIVERSITY means starts with our personal experiences. A lot of what makes us unique as individuals is our special relationships with family, friends, neighbors, teachers, co-workers, congregations, and the other people who shape our lives. We weren’t born who we are now. We became that person by interacting with significant others. So when we talk about diversity we often describe experiences involving people who are close to us. That’s why saying “I really like strawberry ice cream” is a lot different from saying “My parents are immigrants.” It takes courage to communicate personal experiences to people we don’t know very well.

But diversity talk is also challenging because it is much more than personal opinion. There are a lot of facts, too, so what you say could be true or false, accurate or inaccurate. Facts are important when discussing diversity because there are so many misconceptions. For example, if you hear someone say, “Immigrants take jobs from Americans,” you may feel the statement is wrong but not be able to explain why. If you knew some facts, however, you could respond: “Actually, working immigrants create jobs because as consumers they spend their earnings to buy houses, cars, and other goods and services.”
It is important to have valid and reliable information before discussing a topic related to diversity. But if you think you have to “be smart” in order to say something, then many people will feel too inhibited to talk.

Fact, rather than opinion, shapes communication about diversity in two ways. First, diversity issues almost always involve a long history of inequality, struggle, partial success, and disappointments. When people talk about diversity they correctly feel that they are continuing a pre-existing discussion or debate, not starting a new one. We don’t want to simplify or trivialize an aspect of diversity because we don’t know something about history, such as key dates, events, and laws.

Second, globalization is constantly reshaping what diversity means. According to the U.S. Census, the United States has become the first country in world history to be literally made up of people from every part of the world. But all countries are impacted by globalization. Diversity inside one country affects the culture, economy, and politics of other countries. If you don’t know something about these countries and the people in them, such as their holidays and religious events, you may feel too uninformed to talk.

People may have personal stories about diversity and know some facts but still feel that communicating about it is challenging because the topic is often controversial. People feel that others listening to what they say are likely to express support or disapproval in some way. There is a big difference between saying “It’s a nice day” in public and “I’m proud of my immigrant ancestors” or “Racism is a problem in the criminal justice system.” When we talk about diversity we are taking a stand. When we take a stand we are taking a risk since most people will have a positive or negative reaction to what we say rather than feeling neutral. Because diversity is challenging to talk about the result is often miscommunication.

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES: MISCOMMUNICATION

IN THE CLASSROOM, miscommunication has four main sources. First, students’ vocabulary for communicating about diversity comes from popular discourse, primarily entertainment and the media’s coverage of controversial events. Students therefore rely on a tiny lexicon to communicate about a very complex subject. Learning a larger vocabulary from a lexicon is essential for students to effectively communicate about diversity.

Second, many terms that students use – such as “racism” and “affirmative action” – actually have a different meaning than they think. Unlearning the meanings of key terms is just as important as learning the meanings of new terms.
Third, many ordinary words that students use – such as “ignorant,” “uneducated,” and “opinionated” – are vague. They either exaggerate a problem or underestimate the seriousness of a problem.

Fourth, fields such as medicine and law have precise terms in order to accurately diagnose a health problem or a possible legal violation. The field of diversity has similar terms that students can learn. Instead of “ignorant” they can learn to make more accurate statements such as:

_He is prejudiced toward immigrants because he has stereotypes about them. But I don’t think he would ever discriminate against them at work because that’s illegal. Actually, he’s the type of person who could learn multicultural relativism if he attended an ethnic event._

As the above passage suggests, nobody is born with the ability to effectively communicate. It is something learned and relearned. Of course, we need teachers to help us learn and this Lexicon is designed to do that.

HOW TO USE THE LEXICON

STUDENTS QUICKLY UNDERSTAND that “doing something about diversity” first requires effective interpersonal communication about diversity. You need to know how to convey your ideas and feelings to other people if you want to reduce prejudice, learn the value of multiculturalism, or avoid discriminatory actions.

Effective communication about diversity requires some consensus on the meaning of basic vocabulary terms. You can think of this Lexicon as a specialized dictionary on what we call “the language of diversity.” We have selected the most important terms one needs to know in order to have a meaningful and rewarding discussion about the ways race, ethnicity, inequality, and social change shape our lives. The meanings of the terms are derived from a wide range of sources, including: social science research; court decisions and law; corporate best practices experience; and ethnic community traditions and organizations.

The Lexicon is divided into sections that can be incorporated into a series of classes or used as lesson plans.

The section on NAMES is a good place to begin. Effective communication about diversity can only start when we know and feel comfortable naming different groups.

The section THE MELTING POT covers the key terms for describing what many people agree is a distinctive feature of the U.S.: it has always been a place where different cultures interact and to varying degrees form new cultures. Globalization in general, and international migration in particular, make it very important to have a vocabulary for talking about different cultures and how they change.
The so-called American melting-pot, however, sometimes boils over. Along with diversity we also have adversity. The section **ADVERSITY** covers terms that describe different types of problems, conflicts, and inequalities. The section **SOLUTIONS** contains the vocabulary for talking about a wide range of ideas for preventing or reducing adversity.

One of the best ways to help students feel more comfortable with diversity and to eliminate adversity is to learn about – or actually participate in – events of special significance to an ethnic community or country. The sections **CULTURAL EVENTS** and **RELIGIOUS EVENTS** list secular and sacred holidays, celebrations, and rituals under broad geographic or religious headings. Most students feel they should be able to review a calendar and identify the dates in each month that hold significance for a wide range of cultures, religions, and nationalities. It can be surprisingly effective and rewarding to have students, individually or in small groups, research one of these events and then make a class presentation.

Celebrating diversity is both fun and educational, but it is also easy to convince students that diversity is important for their professional careers. First, we have the right to be free from discrimination when we look for jobs and work in them. Second, we have the responsibility not to engage or condone discrimination in our workplace. The Lexicon therefore has a section entitled **LAW** that reviews significant court cases, legislation, and federal agencies. Finally, diversity is a resource that can increase productivity and achievement in the workplace. The section **RIGHTS AND RESOURCES** covers the main terms relevant to affirmative action and equal employment opportunity.

The more of the terms in these sections you and your students know, the more effective your communication about diversity will be. Get ready for some “great class discussions.”
NAMES

**Aboriginal People** – People belonging to the first human inhabitants or indigenous nations of North and South America.

**Africa** – One of the seven continents on earth, often divided into north, west, east, central, and southern Africa. The largest countries include Nigeria and Ethiopia.

**African American** – An ethnic group in the United States whose ancestors came from Africa; a person who self-identifies with this group.

**Alien** – A legal term used by the U.S. government to describe a foreign-born resident who is not yet a citizen of the U.S.; often has negative connotations because it incorrectly suggests “out of place”.

**Amerasian** – An individual of American and Asian descent, especially one fathered by an American serviceman in Asia.

**American** – A popular name for the culture and people that have been created in the U.S. through a fusion or “melting pot” of diverse groups; can encompass the larger fusion of people that include North, Central and South America.

**American Indian** – A descendent of any of the aboriginal peoples of North America who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or has community recognition as an American Indian or Alaskan Native.

**Alaskan Native** – Often called Inuit, these people prefer a designation distinct from the other indigenous people called Native Americans.

**Ancestry** – The line of people from whom one is descended; similar to a family tree; often used in the U.S. to name a country or countries from which one’s ancestors emigrated.
**Arab** – A speaker of the Arabic language; not synonymous with Muslim.

**Asia** – One of the seven continents on earth; often divided into east, south, southeast, and central Asia. Largest countries include China, India, and Indonesia.

**Asian** – One of the five racial categories used by the U.S. Census to collect demographic information about people in the U.S.

**Asian American** – A panethnic group in the U.S. comprising many specific ethnic groups of Asian descent, the largest of which (Chinese Americans) is only about 25 percent of the total; a person who self-identifies with this group. Use specific ethnic group name (e.g., Hmong American, Filipino American) when possible.

**Band** – A governmental subset of a Native American tribe (See First Nations).

**Biracial** – People who do not want to be classified into a single race because they have ancestors belonging to mainly two races (Also see Multiracial).

**Bisexual** – Individuals who are attracted to members of both the male and female sex.

**Black** – One of the five racial categories used by the U.S. Census to collect demographic information about people in the U.S.; a racial name for people of African ancestry that emphasizes phenotype rather than culture (see African American).

**Black English** – A dialect of English spoken primarily by urban African Americans; also called Ebonics (See Ebonics).

**Canuck** – Originally referring specifically to a French Canadian, the term now refers to any Canadian and is often used by themselves in an affectionate or patriotic way.
Caucasian – An outdated term for someone with lighter skin tone or European ancestry; better to use white. Caucasian came from an antiquated theory that whites first originated in the Caucasus Mountains in Eurasia.

Chicano / Chicana – A man/woman of Mexican ancestry born in the U.S.

Citizen – A person who is a full legal member of a society by birth or completing a citizenship procedure; similar to nationality. In the U.S., only U.S. citizens can vote, work for the federal government, and hold a U.S. passport. Many countries, but not the U.S., allow dual citizenship.

Cultural Group – A group that shares a way of life handed down from one generation to another (see Ethnic Group).

Diaspora – A dispersal of an ethnic group from an original homeland. Well known global diasporas include Jews, Palestinians, Africans, Chinese, and Indians.

Disability – The World Health Organization defines it as “any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered usual for a human being.”

Disabled Individual – Any person who 1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or 2) has a record of such impairment; or 3) is regarded as having such an impairment.

Disabled Veteran – A person entitled to disability compensation under laws administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for a disability rate of 30 percent or more, or a person whose discharge or release from active duty was for a disability incurred in the line of duty.
Domestic Partners – Unmarried partners who share living quarters, often because they are not allowed by law to marry, such as Gays and Lesbians.

Dominant Group – The group at the top of a societal hierarchy because it has the most power and privilege.

Ebonics – The merging of ebony and phonics (literally, “black sounds”), referring to the English spoken by many African Americans.

Emigrant – A person who leaves their country of origin to reside in a foreign country.

Ethnic Group – A group of people who share similar values, norms, and symbolically significant material objects that form a distinctive way of life expressed through language, religion, holidays, food, clothing, music, sports, family and marriage patterns, arts and crafts.

Ethnicity – The social identity or sense of membership derived from belonging to an ethnic group.

Eurasian – People who have descended from a recent or historical mixture of European and Asian ancestors.

European American – An individual with European ancestry living in the United States.

Expatriate – An individual who works abroad in a culture different from his or her own.

Feminism – The belief that women and men should have equal rights and status in institutions such as government, the workplace, and family.
First Nations – One of the three cultural groups of Aboriginal Peoples in North America. There are 633 First Nations Bands, representing 52 nations or cultural groups, and more than 50 languages.

Foreign National – A resident of a country who is not a citizen of that country.

Fundamentalist – A person or belief which stresses strict and literal adherence to a set of basic principles, usually religious ones.

Gay – A male homosexual, or pertaining to male homosexuality.

Gender – Classification based on the behavioral categories “masculine” and “feminine,” as opposed to the biological categories “male” and “female.”

Gender Identity – A person’s self-identified or perceived gender which includes appearance and behavior, whether or not those traits are different from what was associated with the person’s sex at birth.

Gender Roles – The behaviors people engage in to express being a man or a woman.

Handicapped – Avoid usage (See Disabled Individual).

Heterosexual – Attracted to members of the opposite sex.

Hispanic – A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. The term was invented by the U.S. Census in 1970. Many people with Latin American ancestry prefer the name Latino/Latina because they feel Hispanic overemphasizes the influence of Spain.

Hispanic-American – Of or relating to the culture of Hispanic Americans.
Hispanic American – Individuals living in the United States with ancestry from one or more of the Spanish-speaking countries.

Homosexual – Attracted to members of the same sex.

Hyphenation – The preferred usage is to avoid using hyphens when designating groups (e.g., African Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanic Americans). It is appropriate to add a hyphen only when using the terms as adjectives, such as Asian-American communities.

Identity Politics – A political action to claim civil or human rights based on shared group membership, such as race, ethnicity, sex, or sexuality.

Illegal Immigrant / Illegal Alien – An individual who has entered a country without proper documentation and without complying with immigration procedures, or who has overstayed their temporary legal visit.

Immigrant – A person who resides in a country other than that of their origin. They may or may not be a citizen of the host country (see Citizen).

Indian – American Indian is more acceptable, but the preferred terms are Native American, indigenous person, or aboriginal person (See Native American).

Indigenous – Originating from a culture with ancient ties to the land in which a group resides.

Indigenous Australian – A person who is of Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, identifies as such, and is recognized as such by their community.

Indigenous People – People living in an area generally since prehistoric times.
**In-group** – A social group which provides a sense of identity to an individual through feelings of loyalty and membership; opposite of out-group.

**Inuit** – Aboriginal peoples in Alaska and Canada’s Northwest Territories, northern Quebec, and Labrador.

**Islam** – A monotheistic religion based upon the teachings of Muhammad. It is the second-largest religion in the world today, with an estimated 1.7 billion adherents known as Muslims.

**Jew(s)** – A people with a shared historical experience and religious heritage based on the Hebrew Bible (also called Torah; avoid “Old Testament”).

**Latino/Latina** – A man/woman living in the United States originating from, or having a heritage relating to, Latin America.

**Lesbian** – A female homosexual, or pertaining to female homosexuality.

**LGBTQA** – An acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Questioning, and Ally.

**Métis** – Persons of mixed Native American and French ancestry.

**Mexican American** – People in the United States who are of Mexican descent.

**Minority** – A statistical term meaning less than one-half.

**Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) / Minority-Owned Business** – A business that is at least 51 percent owned and operated by members of a minority group.
Minority Group – A group with a lower position in a societal hierarchy because they have less power and privilege and more disadvantages. The term does not refer to being few in number but to excessive disadvantages and a lack of equality.

Model Minority – A negative stereotype which implies that a minority group has achieved success due to its cultural values, not political struggles, and that other disadvantaged groups should copy them.

Mohammedan / Muhammadan – A term used as both a noun and an adjective meaning belonging or relating to either the religion of Islam or to that of the prophet Muhammad. The term is now largely superseded by Muslim or Islamic.

Mountain English – A dialect of English that is spoken primarily in the nineteen states of the Appalachian region of the United States.

Multiracial – A person or group that has ancestry from two or more races.

Muslim / Moslem – One who is a follower or believer of the Islamic religion.

National Origin – A classification based on the country in which a person was born, regardless of the country in which they currently reside. U.S. immigration policy used national origin quotas from 1921 to 1965 to determine the number of immigrants admitted from a country. The largest numbers were allocated to Western Europe, few to Eastern Europe, and none to Asia.

Native – Belonging to a particular place or region from birth.

Native-American – Of or relating to the culture of Native Americans.
Native American – The descendants of the various indigenous populations that occupied the land now designated North America.

Non-English Speaking Background (NESB) – Indicates that a person’s language background is not English, but it does not indicate a person’s knowledge of English.

Non-Status Indian – An aboriginal person who is not recognized as “Indian” under Canada’s Indian Act. This term does not apply to Inuit or Métis persons as they are not included under the Indian Act.

Oriental – Outdated but still in use. The opposite of Occidental (Western), that is, Eastern. Asian or Asian American is better.

Other Eligible Veteran – Individuals who served on active duty in the U.S. military, ground, naval or air service during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized.

Pacific Islander – People from the island countries and U.S. territories in the Pacific Ocean, such as Guam and American Samoa.

Pan-Africanism – The movement to unite all peoples of the African Diaspora and to link all African countries across the continent through a common government, language, ideology, or belief.

People of Color / Persons of Color – A generic term to describe all non-white racial or ethnic groups. The term is often confusing because of its association with the antiquated term “colored,” which is not appropriate. In addition, not all minority groups have a distinct color from whites, such as Jews and many people from Latin America.
**Protected Class** – A group of people protected from discrimination under government regulations and laws.

**Qualified Disabled Veteran** – A disabled veteran who is capable of performing a particular job with or without accommodation to the disability.

**Qualified Disabled Person** – An individual with a disability who is capable of performing a particular job with or without accommodation.

**Race** – A group of people defined by their external physical appearance (phenotype), such as skin shade, hair texture, and eye shape. There is only one human race according to biologists because humans share more than 99.9 percent of their genetic makeup (genotype) regardless of what they look like on the outside. People around the world look different because the human body evolved over time under different environmental conditions. For example, lighter skin absorbs more sunlight while darker skin repels more sunlight. The human body is harmed by too much sunlight (e.g., nearer to the equator) or too little sunlight (e.g., nearer to the north pole).

**Racial Identity** – One’s sense of identification or association with a particular racial group.

**Racialization** – The process by which a society designates a group as different, and therefore subject to unequal treatment, due to its external physical appearance.

**Racial Minority** – A group that experiences less opportunity and more inequality due to negative reactions to their external physical appearance.

**Refugee** – A person who has been forced by persecution to leave their country of origin and seek asylum in another country. The UN first defined a refugee in 1951 when it created the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.
Reservation – Land set aside by a federal treaty or other legal document for aboriginal people to live on.

Sex – Classification based on biological and physical differences, which are distinguished respectively as “male” or “female.”

Sexual Orientation – Refers to men or women who are Heterosexual, Homosexual, Bisexual, Transsexual or Transgender (See these definitions). Also includes Asexual, referring to those who do not experience sexual attractions.

Standard English – A dialect of the English language which is most acceptable or “correct,” and used by nearly all of those in the middle and upper financial classes.

Transgender – People who were born a particular gender but feel that it is a false or inaccurate description of who they really are.

Transsexual – A person who strongly identifies with the opposite sex and may want to live as a member of this sex by undergoing surgery and hormone therapy.

Treaty Indians – Indigenous people who are descendants of First Nations and have signed treaties with the federal government.

Two or More Races – Refers to combinations of two or more of the following race categories: White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, or some other race.

Veteran – An individual who is currently on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces; or has honorably served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for at least two years; or is currently serving on Reserve or National Guard duty.
**Vietnam-Era Veteran** – A person who served on active duty for more than 180 days between August 5, 1964, and May 7, 1975, and was discharged or released with other than a dishonorable discharge.

**Visible Minority** – Mostly used as a legal term, it describes non-dominant groups who are not white.

**White** – One of the five racial categories used by the U.S. Census to collect demographic information about people in the U.S.; a racial name for people of European ancestry that emphasizes phenotype rather than culture.

**Woman-Owned Business Enterprise (WBE)** – A business that is at least 51 percent owned/operated/controlled by a woman. (Also Woman- /Minority-Owned Business Enterprise – W/MBE)
THE MELTING POT

**Accent** – Pronunciation that is typical of a group of people from a particular geographic region.

**Acculturation** – The process of borrowing the traits of and functioning within a different culture while retaining one’s original culture. Similar to bicultural.

**Afrocentrism** – As an approach to the study of world history, Afrocentrism holds that Eurocentrism has led to the neglect of the contributions of Africa’s original peoples.

**Assimilation** – To adopt the attitudes, values, and behaviors of another culture by giving up one’s original culture.

**Bicultural** – A person who belongs to two distinct cultures and can appropriately select behaviors, values and attitudes from both of them.

**Code Switching** – The ability to use different speech and language forms depending on the racial and ethnic context of the communication.

**Communication Style** – A set of culturally learned characteristics associated with language and learning style, which involves different aspects of communication such as formal versus informal, emotional versus subdued, direct versus indirect, objective versus subjective, and responses to guilt and accusations.

**Corporate Culture** – Beliefs, values and practices adopted by an organization that positively or negatively influence employee conduct, behavior, and morale.

**Corporate Values** – The standards and principles an organization regards as important.
**Creed** – A professed faith, including both beliefs and observances or worship.

**Cross-Cultural** – Involvement or interaction between two cultures.

**Cultural Capital** – The subjective and objective cultural knowledge one needs to advance or become a leader in society.

**Cultural Conditioning** – The unconscious process by which we adopt the ways of thinking of our own culture.

**Cultural Differences** – The distinctive behaviors, beliefs, customs, and traditions, that characterize an ethnic group.

**Cultural Diffusion** – The spread of objects and ideas from one culture to another, especially if it occurs independently of population movement.

**Cultural Diversity** – The degree to which a community or organization is inclusive and represents all the groups in a society.

**Cultural Heritage** – The knowledge, beliefs, and customs that each of us received from previous generations.

**Cultural Pluralism** – The retention, preservation, or promotion of ethnicity; the opposite of assimilation.

**Culture** – The way of life, learned consciously and unconsciously, by a group of people, including language, religion, crafts, art, holiday celebrations, food, clothing, and sports.

**Culture Shock** – The internal or external reactions one has toward drastic change in his or her cultural environment.

**Dialect** – Variations of a standard language that includes differences in pronunciation, word usage, and syntax.
**Diversity** – The state of having multiple groups and viewpoints that represent the full range of cultures in a society or the world; the opposite of homogeneity.

**Dominant Culture** – The attitudes, values, and behaviors of the dominant group in a society.

**ELL** – Acronym for English Language Learner. ELL is often used over ESL since many people already know two or more languages when they start learning English.

**ESL** – Acronym for English as a Second Language (contrast with ELL).

**Fusion** – A process in which two or more cultures merge to form a new culture. An older term for this process was amalgamation.

**Global Manager** – A culturally sensitive manager capable of operating in a world market.

**Globalization** – The internationalizing of a country, group or business through the mixture of peoples or technology from different countries.

**Global Perspective** – A worldview which takes into account the fact that individuals and societies are a part of a planet, not just a country.

**Heterogeneity** – The state of dissimilarity or diversity within a group; the opposite of homogeneity.

**Linguistic Diversity** – The fact that many languages have always been and still are spoken in the United States.
**Melting Pot** – A society that has blended several cultures together to form a new culture. The term implies a degree of assimilation and fusion. Often contrasted with Salad Bowl, meaning a society where cultural differences are still evident.

**Monochronic** – A culture or cultural group that focuses on one activity or behavior at a time in a linear fashion (e.g., carrying on one conversation at a time). (See **Polychronic**)

**Monoculture** – A single, homogeneous culture that lacks diversity and resists change.

**Normative** – Norms of a society which influence and regulate an individual’s beliefs and behavior.

**Norms** – Behaviors expected of people so they can function as a group.

**Organizational Culture** – The collection of values and norms that are shared by people and groups in an organization.

**Pluralism** – A social system that allows for the development of a common culture, while preserving the right of each group to maintain its cultural heritage; the opposite of assimilation.

**Pluralistic** – Relating to a policy of favoring the preservation and existence of distinctive ethnic groups within a society.

**Race Relations** – The interaction and degree of harmony between people who are racially different.

**Religion** – Commitment or devotion to a religious faith and the personal attitudes, beliefs and practices that coincide with it.

**Separatism** – Situation in which a social group voluntarily decides that it is best for it to maintain its own cultural identity and institutions.
**Social Constructionism** – The perception of something appearing normal or natural, but which was actually “constructed” through cultural and social practice.

**Socialization** – The process in which people learn appropriate beliefs and behaviors that allow them to become functioning members of a group.

**Sociocultural Theory** – The explanation of human behavior focusing on the social and cultural causes of attitudes and actions, rather than biological causes.

**Subculture** – A social group with distinctive attitudes, values, and norms that set it apart from the dominant culture.

**Values** – An individual’s or a group’s ideals and beliefs that define right and wrong, appropriate and inappropriate.
ADVERSITY

**Ableism** – The belief that people can be ranked as superior or inferior based on their cognitive and physical abilities.

**Ageism / Agism** – The belief that people can be ranked as superior or inferior based on their age.

**Anglo-Conformity** – The belief that everyone must assimilate into the culture of the English speaking European-American society in the United States.

**Anti-Semitism** – Prejudice and discrimination toward Jews based on negative attitudes toward their religion and culture.

**Apartheid** – A policy of institutionalized segregation in the Republic of South Africa to maintain white domination.

**Assimilationist Model** – A policy which advocates assimilation, especially as it concerns children in public schools.

**Attribution** – Judgments people make about others based on limited observations.

**Bias** – Preference for or against an individual or group which interferes with one’s impartial judgment.

**Bias Incident** – An act motivated by prejudice or hatred against a person because of their race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender, age, differing abilities, and other characteristics.

**Bigot** – A stubborn or intolerant person who is committed to their biased opinions and prejudices.

**Bigotry** – An unreasonable attachment to stereotypes and prejudices.
**Censorship** – The act of suppressing the production of or access to information, sources, literature, the performing arts, letters, documents or ideologies which are believed to be unacceptable or dangerous for political, moral or religious reasons.

**Classism** – The belief that people can be assigned value according to their socioeconomic status.

**Closed Network** – A group of people who exclude others from the exchange of information and resources.

**Colonialism** – Usually referring to the period of European colonization from 1492 onwards, in the Americas, Asia, and Africa.

**Color Discrimination** – Occurs when an individual is discriminated against because of their skin’s lightness, darkness, or other color characteristic.

**Colorism** – A form of prejudice that occurs mainly in the U.S., Central America, South America, and the Caribbean in which lighter skin tones are preferred over darker skin tones.

**Concrete Ceiling** – The seemingly impenetrable barriers in an organization that inhibit the progress of people from minority groups.

**Confirmation Bias** – Resisting new information about others because it doesn’t match the information already established.

**Cultural Hegemony** – The everyday practices and beliefs that provide the foundation for complex systems of domination and prevent people from thinking about social change.

**Disadvantaged** – A historically oppressed group characterized by fewer economic, social, and political opportunities for success.
**Discrimination** – Treating people unequally based on their group membership.

**Disparate Effect / Disparate Impact** – An organizational practice or standard that has statistically negative impacts on a protected group even though it is not intentionally discriminatory.

**Disparate Treatment** – A category of employment discrimination which can be found when an employer treats an individual or group differently because of their race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability or veteran status.

**Disparity** – The underutilization of minorities, women and/or people with disabilities.

**Environmental Racism** – A form of racism in which toxic wastes are allowed to be deposited or discarded in or near minority group communities.

**Essentialize** – A form of prejudice which fails to look beyond the complexities of an individual and reduces their diverse qualities into a single name or category.

**Essentialism** – The belief that it acceptable to reduced a group or individual to a single name or category.

**Ethnocentrism** – A belief that judges attributes of other cultures as “normal” or “abnormal” based on the standards of one’s own culture.

**Eurocentrism** – The practice of consciously or unconsciously favoring the culture of Europe over other cultures.

**Foodcourt Multiculturalism** – A superficial or temporary appreciation of other cultures, such as their food, rather than a deep respect and understanding.
Gender Bias – The grouping or separation of gender in a way which prefers one sex over the other.

Gender Discrimination – Any action that denies privileges, opportunities or rewards to an individual or a group because of their sex.

Gender Role Stereotyping – The process of attributing specific behaviors, abilities, interests, and values to someone based on their sex.

Genetic-Based Discrimination – The practice of requesting genetic testing information during hiring processes or using other testing information on which to base other employment decisions.

Genocide – The violent elimination of a people; cultural genocide may leave the people alive but without their original culture.

Genotype – The genetic make up of a person; humans share more than 99.9% of their genotype regardless of what they look like and are so similar biologically that they can donate blood and organs to each other (See Phenotype).

Ghetto – A segregated urban neighborhood in which a minority group is forced to live by law or informal social norms. First used to describe the walled off part of European cities where Jews were forced to live.

Glass Ceiling – The maximum position and salary minorities and women are allowed to reach without the possibility of further advancement within an organization.

Harassment – Any unwelcome conduct, verbal or physical, which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational, work, or living environment.
**Hate Crime** – A violent act against an individual or group, or their property, because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, gender, or ethnicity.

**Hate Group** – A group that promotes animosity toward identifiable groups of people such as immigrants; people with disabilities; members of racial, religious or cultural groups; or people who are gay or lesbian.

**Hate Incident** – Behavior which constitutes an expression of hostility against a person, group, or their property because of their differences.

**Hate Propaganda** – Ideologies or beliefs transmitted in written, verbal or electronic form in order to promote hateful and belligerent attitudes toward specific groups of people.

**Heterosexism** – The belief that heterosexuality is superior to other forms of sexuality.

**Holocaust** – Widespread destruction and loss of life. The term specifically refers to the murder of over six million Jews by the Nazis during World War II.

**Homophobia** – The irrational fear of people who are believed to be lesbian, gay or bisexual.

**Homosocial Reproduction** – The practice by which leaders of organizations inadvertently “reproduce” themselves when promoting individuals to senior positions because they feel more comfortable with those who are most like them.

**Hostile Work Environment** – Severe behavior that creates an unwelcome or abusive work environment and interferes with a person’s ability to do their job.

**Hypodescent** – A categorizing of racial membership in which any amount of biological inheritance from a minority group automatically places one in that group; also called “the one-drop rule.”
**Individual Racism** – Personal beliefs and attitudes about race that lead to negative judgments and behavior in everyday social interactions; also called overt racism.

**Institutional Privilege** – The social structure that gives groups an advantage or disadvantage in competition for resources such as jobs, finances, and power.

**Institutional Racism** – Laws, policies, or norms that perpetuate racism regardless of the beliefs among the individuals who practice them. These practices often seem neutral on the surface but have an exclusionary effect on particular groups; also called covert racism.

**Internalized Dominance** – A feeling of superiority and prestige, often unconscious, due to membership in a dominant group.

**Internalized Oppression** – Acceptance of stereotypes which lock members of minority groups into thinking of themselves only as victims of oppression.

**Intersectionality** – The combination of all forms of oppression and discrimination, and the way they are interwoven within existing systems.

**Intolerance** – The inability to interact with people and viewpoints from another culture.

**Isms** – A set of attitudes and actions that support a belief system.

**Islamophobia** – A term recently coined to refer to stereotypes, bias, or acts of hostility toward Muslims or followers of Islam.

**Linguistic Profiling** – Determining characteristics such as socioeconomic or immigration status from the way a person speaks or uses language.
**Marginalization** – Exists when the voices of a minority group within an organization are separated from the problem-solving and central decision-making of that institution.

**Misogyny** – An irrational hatred and fear of women.

**Nationalism** – A collective state of mind in which people place emphasis on promotion of their nation above all others.

**Nativism** – The belief that people born in a society deserve more rights than those who now live there but were born in another society; a negative view of immigrants which devalues them compared to the native-born.

**Neo-Colonialization** – A term for policies adopted by developed countries and organizations that exert control over developing countries, and disguise this control as humanitarian help or aid.

**Oppression** – Dominance of one individual or group over another, less powerful, individual or group through physical, psychological, social, or economic force.

**Organizational Discrimination** – Personnel practices which exclude protected class members from equal employment opportunity (See Disparate Effect).

**Over-Generalization** – A component of stereotyping that characterizes an entire group by the behavior of a few individuals.

**Patriarchy** – A social system that grants more power and superiority to men than it does women.

**Perpetuator** – An individual who is aware of biases and prejudices but continues to reinforce and reward bigotry and inappropriate behavior.
**Phenotype** – External physical features such as skin color and hair texture (see *Genotype*).

**Prejudice** – Prejudging individuals on the basis of their group membership.

**Privilege** – Power and advantages which benefit a group because of the historical oppression of other groups.

**Racial Discrimination** – Treating people unequally based on race, color, or descent.

**Racial Profiling** – A police stop and search practice based on presumed criminality due to phenotype.

**Racism** – The belief that groups can be ranked as superior or inferior based on their phenotype.

**Racist** – An individual or organization whose beliefs or actions imply that certain races are inferior or have inferior characteristics.

**Racist Slurs** – Insulting statements directed toward a particular racial or ethnic group.

**Redlining** – The organizational practice of refusing to serve a geographical area, such as with bank loans, because of the race or income of the people who live there.

**Reverse Discrimination** – A controversial term that asserts that members of a dominant group may be harmed by policies that assist minority groups.

**Scapegoating** – Blaming a group for a problem they did not cause in order to avoid the hard work of finding the real cause or causes.

**Segregation** – Residential, educational, or occupational separation of groups based on race, ethnicity, and/or sex.
**Sex Discrimination** – Discriminatory treatment toward a person or group based on their gender.

**Sexism** – The belief that people can be ranked as superior or inferior based on their sex.

**Sexual Harassment** – The unwanted or unwelcome attention directed toward a person’s sexuality or sexual identity.

**Stereotype** – A false or inaccurate over-generalization about a group of people which results in the negative categorization of each member of that group, without regard for individual differences.

**Stereotype Vulnerability** – The danger of not performing to one’s ability because of the anxiety and fear of supporting a stereotype by failing.

**Symbolic Racism** – An expression of racial animosity toward a group which is triggered by a controversial public policy or social issue; this form of racism is contextual rather than individual or institutional.

**Third-Party Sexual Harassment** – Harassment of an employee by a client, customer, vendor or someone other than another employee.

**White Privilege** – The social, economic, and political benefits of being a member of a dominant white group; whites are often unaware of these privileges, such as being treated respectfully while shopping.

**Xenophobia** – The fear and thus dislike of anything that is perceived as foreign or outside of one’s country or culture.
SOLUTIONS

Ally – A member of a dominant group who works with minority groups to end oppression.

Anti-Racism – The practice of identifying and challenging values, structures and behaviors that perpetuate racial prejudice and racial discrimination.

Bilingualism – The ability to speak two languages (See Multilingualism).

Change Agents – Individuals within an organization who are committed to facilitating change by modeling appropriate behaviors. They ensure that systems, policies, and practices are equitable and modify them as needed.

Contact Hypothesis – The proposition that prejudice is reduced when increased interpersonal interaction with out-groups disproves stereotypes.

Confrontation Prejudice Reduction Model – Techniques for reducing prejudice that intentionally create an uncomfortable situation for members of a dominant group so that they temporarily feel what it is like to be in a minority group.

Cosmopolitan – A person capable of operating comfortably in a global environment; literally means “a citizen of the world.”

Cross-Cultural Communication – The ability to exchange information between a sender and receiver who are of different cultural, ethnic, or linguistic backgrounds.

Cultural Competence – The ability to successfully function within another culture by learning some of its attitudes, values, and norms.
Culturally Appropriate Services – The conditions of services that are sensitive and responsive to the cultural differences that exist in particular cultural groups.

Culturally Competent Employee – An employee with the competence, attitude, and skills that enable an employee to deliver services to culturally diverse individuals.

Cultural Relativism – The ability to understand other cultures from their own perspective; the opposite of ethnocentrism.

Cultural Sensitivity – Demonstrating sensitivity to cultural differences and similarities in order to effectively communicate a message.

Cultural Synergy – Occurs when cultural differences are taken into account and used by a multicultural group.

Culture-Specific Approaches – Cross-cultural training designed to prepare people to live and/or work with people of a particular culture or group.

Diversity Champion – An individual who acts as a role model and will independently take action to promote multiculturalism and reduce inequality.

Emancipation – To free individuals from discrimination, oppression and domination.

Empathy Prejudice Reduction Model – Techniques for reducing prejudice that use interpersonal communication to encourage bonding and a reduction of social distance.

Empowerment – The feeling of being capable, motivated, and allowed to pursue a goal or promote social change.

Equity – Fairness, justice, and impartiality to all individuals in an inclusionary environment; opposite of inequality.
**Gender-Sensitive** – Describing practices that take differences in gender into account.

**Inclusion** – A system or process designed so that people in an organization at all levels can share in decision-making and company success.

**Inclusive Language** – The conscious selection of vocabulary which avoids the inadvertent or implicit exclusion of particular groups.

**Inclusiveness** – Exists when all group members or employees share power and decision-making in projects, programs and institutions.

**Integration** – The process of opening an organization and institution to all groups; the opposite of segregation.

**Mentoring** – A career development method where less experienced employees are matched with those who are more experienced.

**Multicultural Education / Multiracial Education** – A term referring to a set of learning activities designed to create and enhance the understanding of and respect for different cultures.

**Multiculturalism** – The belief that experiencing diversity enriches people’s lives and is a valuable resource for organizations.

**Multilingualism** – The ability to speak more than two languages.

**Nondiscrimination** – The practice of not discriminating against members of disadvantaged or protected groups.
Normalization – A philosophical view that the lives of disabled individuals of any age should be characterized as much as possible by the same kinds of experiences, daily routines, and rhythms as those of persons who do not have disabilities.

Optimizing Diversity – Integrating the best diversity practices suitable for one’s own organization.

Sensitivity Training – A form of counseling geared toward increasing self-awareness and sensitivity to others.

Social Distance – The degree to which we are comfortable having relationships with other racial or ethnic groups, ranging from very personal to impersonal forms of interaction.

Social Justice – The sacrifice people have made throughout the world in an effort to attain equality, economic opportunity, freedom, and human rights.

Tolerance – The ability to “get along” with people from diverse backgrounds but not a genuine interest or appreciation of diversity.
CULTURAL EVENTS – North America
(United States / Canada / Puerto Rico)

**African-American History Month** (February) – This month-long celebration was an expansion of Negro History Week, which was established in 1926 by Carter G. Woodson, who selected the week in February that embraced the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln.

**Armed Forces Day** – Observed on the third Saturday in May to recognize, venerate and honor all U.S. military forces.

**Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month** (May) – Commemorates the contributions of people of Asian and Pacific Islander descent in the United States.

**Battle of Little Bighorn** (American Indian – June 25th) – Also called Custer’s Last Stand, this battle was the most famous incident with the Indian Wars and was a great victory for the Cheyenne.

**Black History Month** – (See African-American History Month)

**Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka**
(African American – May 17th) – A landmark decision in 1954 which outlawed racial segregation of public education.

**Canada Day** (Canada – July 2nd) – This national holiday marks the formation of the union in 1867.

**Columbus Day** (October 8th) – A holiday commemorating Christopher Columbus’s arrival in the “New World” in 1492.

**Discovery Day** (Puerto Rico – November 19th) – This holiday commemorates the discovery of Puerto Rico by Christopher Columbus in 1493.
Duarte *dwar-tay* Day (Dominican Republic – January 26th) – Along with Francisco de Rosario Sanchez and Ramon Martias Mella, Juan Pablo Duarte is one of the founding fathers of the Dominican Republic.

**Dutch American Heritage Day** (November 16th) – Adopted by Congress in 1991, this day honors the contributions made by people of Dutch ancestry to the United States.

**Emancipation Day** (Bahamas – August 6th) – A national holiday that commemorates the freedom of slaves in the British Empire in 1834.

**Emancipation Proclamation** (January 1st) – An executive order by President Lincoln declaring the freedom of all slaves in the rebellious areas of the Confederate States of America.

**First Special Olympics Games** (July 19th) – On this day in 1968, the first Special Olympics Games were held at Soldier Field in Chicago.

**Gay and Lesbian Pride Month** (June) – On June 11, 1999, President Clinton issued a presidential proclamation designating June as Gay and Lesbian Pride Month.

**Gathering of Nations Powwow** (American Indian – April 26th) – An annual 3-day event that brings together over 3000 indigenous Native American dancers and singers who represent more than 500 tribes from Canada and the U.S.

**Grito de Lares** *greeto-de-laraz* (Puerto Rico – September 23rd) – This day commemorates the revolt against Spanish rule in Puerto Rico, which occurred in the town of Lares.
Groundhog Day (United States/Canada – February 2nd) – A festival that holds the tradition that if a groundhog emerges from its burrow and sees its shadow it will become frightened and run back into its hole, thus declaring that winter will continue for six more weeks.

Halloween (United Kingdom/United States – October 31st) – An annual festival in which children dress in costumes and collect sweets and gifts from neighborhood homes. It originated as a Pagan festival in Ireland, where bonfires were lit to ward off evil spirits.

Jewish American Heritage Month (May) – A month-long celebration of the rich history of the Jewish people and in honor of the contributions they have made to the United States.

Juneteenth (June 19th) – An annual holiday in fourteen states that commemorates the belated abolition of slavery in Texas.

Kwanzaa quan-za / Kwaanza (African American – December 26th thru January 1st) – A week-long holiday celebrating the African-American heritage and history.

Labor Day (Canada, United States) – A public holiday celebrated on the first Monday in September to honor all working people.

Leif Erikson Day (October 9th) – A day of observance to honor the explorer who led the first Europeans known to have landed in North America.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day (African American) – Observed on the third Monday in January, this day is a federal holiday in honor of the contributions and achievements made by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Memorial Day – A federal holiday observed on the last Monday in May commemorating those who have died in military service.

National Acadian Day (Canada – August 15th) – A day set aside to honor and celebrate the culture, language and traditions of the Acadians.

National American Indian Heritage Month (November) – A month-long celebration to honor and recognize the culture and traditions of the American Indian and Alaskan Native peoples.

National Coming Out Day (October 11th) – A worldwide observance founded by Dr. Robert Eichberg and Jean O’Leary in 1998, aimed at raising awareness of the LGBT community. (See LGBT).

National Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 thru October 15) – A month-long celebration honoring and recognizing the contributions and achievements of Hispanic Americans in the United States.

National Women’s History Month (March) – A month-long celebration to honor the contributions and achievements women have made to the country.

Older Americans Month (May) – A month-long celebration to honor the contributions and achievements of Americans who are 60 years old or older.

Patriot Day (September 11th) – A day honoring the memory of the nearly three thousand people who died in the September 11th attacks on the United States in 2001.

Pioneer Day (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints – July 24th) – An official holiday in Utah that celebrates the settlement of the Mormons in the Salt Lake Valley.
**Presidents’ Day** (United States) – A federal holiday celebrated on the third Monday in February which is designated as George Washington’s birthday.

**Puerto Rican Day Parade** – A parade held on the second Sunday in June which takes place on New York City’s Fifth Avenue, honoring the culture of the more than seven million Puerto Ricans living in the United States.

**Remembrance Day / Armistice Day** (Belgium, Canada, France, United Kingdom – November 11th) – This day commemorates the sacrifice of lives during WWI, WWII, and all other wars.

**Rosa Parks Human Rights Day** (December 1st) – This day honors and commemorates Rosa Louise McCauley Parks, who refused to relinquish her seat on a bus to a white man in direct defiance to segregation laws in the south. This spurred a national movement.

**Stonewall Rebellion** (LGBT – June 28th) – This day commemorates the day in 1969 in which groups of gay and transgendered people forcibly resisted harassment and violent conflicts brought on by New York City police.

**Tartan Day** (April 6th) – A day of celebration to recognize and honor the many contributions and achievements Scottish Americans have made to the United States.

**Thanksgiving Day** – Observed on the fourth Thursday in November, this national holiday celebrates the harvest and other blessings throughout the year.

**Valentine’s Day** (February 14th) – A public holiday on which lovers express their love for each other by sending cards, candy or flowers.
Veterans Day (November 11th) – A holiday honoring war veterans of the United States.

Victoria Day (Canada) – A holiday celebrated on the first Monday on or before May 24th in honor of Queen Victoria.

Women’s Equality Day (August 26th) – Commemorating the date the Woman Suffrage Amendment was established into the U.S. Constitution, giving women the right to vote in 1920.

CULTURAL EVENTS – International

April Fools’ Day / All Fools’ Day (April 1st) – A day of hoaxes and other practical jokes played on friends, family members and co-workers.

International Women’s Day (March 8th) – This day celebrates the economic, political and social achievements of women.

May Day / Labor Day (May 1st) – Also called International Workers’ Day, this day commemorates the struggles of working people throughout the world and celebrates the coming of spring.

New Year’s Day (January 1st) – The first day of the year, which is a holiday observed by most people of the world regardless of ethnicity or religion.

World AIDS Day (December 1st) – A day dedicated to raising awareness of the AIDS pandemic caused by the spread of HIV.
Cultural Events – Africa

Africa Day (Zambia, Zimbabwe – May 25th) – A national holiday in some African states which celebrates the independence from colonial rule.

Enkutatash / Enqutatash (Ethiopia, Rastafarian) – The first day of the New Year according to the Gregorian calendar.

Freedom Day (South Africa – April 27th) – A public holiday commemorating the first democratic post-apartheid elections held in 1994.

Heritage Day (South Africa – September 24th) – A public holiday that encourages South Africans to celebrate their heritage, beliefs and traditions.

Human Rights Day (South Africa – March 21st) – This day commemorates those who lost their lives during the Sharpeville massacre, in which South African police opened fire on a crowd of black protesters.

Kwanzaa quan-za / Kwaanza (African American – December 26th thru January 1st) – A week-long holiday celebrating the African-American heritage and history.

Cultural Events – Australia / New Zealand

ANZAC Day (Australia, New Zealand – April 25th) – A public holiday in Australia and New Zealand honoring the bravery and sacrifice of the members of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC).
**Australia Day** (Australia – January 26th) – In order to relieve the pressures of crowded British prisons, the British government established a penal colony in Australia. The first prisoners arrived on this date in 1788. This has been celebrated as Foundation Day or Anniversary Day, and now as Australia Day, since 1817.

**Queen’s Birthday** (Australia) – Held on the second Monday in June, this holiday honors the birthday of Queen Elizabeth II.

**Queen’s Birthday** (New Zealand) – Held on the first Monday in June, this holiday honors the birthday of Queen Elizabeth II.

**Waitangi why-tung Day** (New Zealand – February 6th) – A public holiday celebrating the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, which made New Zealand part of the British Empire.

**Cultural Events – Mainland Asia**

**Butter Sculpture Festival / Butter Lamp Festival** (Tibet) – An event held at the end of Monlam, or The Great Prayer Festival, where thousands of monks gather to perform religious rituals. It is called the Butter Sculpture Festival because offerings of cakes adorned with elaborate butter sculptures are brought on this day.

**Chakri Day** (Thailand – April 6th) – This holiday honors Rama I The Great who founded the Chakri Dynasty which still rules today.

**Ch’i-hsi / Seventh Night** (China – August 19th) – A festival based on the tale of a young couple who were transformed into stars as punishment for disobeying a god.
**Ching Ming** (or Qingming) **Festival** (China) – One of two most important holidays in which families celebrate the summer’s harvest underneath a full moon.

**Chulalongkorn Day** (Thailand – October 23rd) – This day honors King Chulalongkorn The Great who was the fifth king of the Chakri Dynasty.

**Chusok choo-sock / Harvest Festival** (South Korea – mid- or late September) – A major holiday in which people return to their hometown and perform ancestral worship, and thank their ancestors for blessing the year’s harvest.

**Dragon Boat Festival** (China – June 19th) – (See Tuan-wu or Tuen Ng)

**Eorininal / Children’s Day** (South Korea – May 5th) – A celebration of children that was created by Bhang Jung Huan in 1923.

**Guo Nian / New Year** (China) – A celebratory phrase for the beginning of the Chinese New Year that means “passing of the beast,” which comes in spring.

**Hangul Day** (South Korea – October 9th) – This day commemorates the invention of Hangul, the native alphabet of the Korean language.

**Hyeonchung-il / Memorial Day** (South Korea – June 6th) – A day commemorating soldiers who have died for their country.

**Kui Chieh / Ghost Festival** (China) – A traditional holiday that takes place on the 14th night of the seventh lunar month called the “Ghost Month.” People prepare ritual offerings for the spirits that visit earth from the lower world.
Losar / New Year (Tibet) – Celebrated for 15 days with the main celebrations happening on the first day. Losar is the most important holiday in Tibet.

Queen Sirikit’s Birthday (Thailand – August 12th) – This national public holiday honors the Queen’s birthday and is also celebrated as Mother’s Day.

Sol / New Year (South Korea) – This is the first day of the first month of the lunar year and is also considered to be the first day of spring. It is a time for honoring ancestors and reestablishing family ties.

Sun Yat-sen’s Birthday (Republic of China, Taiwan – November 12th) – A national holiday commemorating China’s modern founder.

Taeborum tay-bore-oam / The Great Moon Festival (South Korea) – Celebrated 15 days after the New Year, this holiday is spent with family and friends who help drive away evil spirits and bring in good luck in the presence of a full moon.

Teachers’ Day / Confucius’ Birthday (Republic of China, Taiwan – September 28th) – Celebrated on the anniversary of Confucius’ birth, this national holiday honors all teachers throughout the country.

Tet Nguyen Dan / New Year (Vietnam) – A festival beginning on the first day of the first lunar month, and marking the beginning of a New Year and the arrival of spring.

Tet Trung Thu / Mid-Autumn Moon Festival (Vietnam) – Held on the fifteenth day of the eighth lunar month, this festival revolves around parents spending time with their children and celebrating this year’s harvest.
Thanh Minh / Respect for Ancestors Day (Vietnam) – An all-day festival in honor of deceased family members.

Tuan-wu / Tuen Ng / Dragon Boat Festival (China – June 19th) – A festival held on the fifth day of the fifth month of the Chinese calendar and that honors the poet Qu Yuan, who drowned himself in a river to protest the corrupt Chu government.

Yuan-Hsiao / Lantern Festival (China) – Occurring on the fifteenth day of the first month of the Chinese New Year, this festival marks the end of the Chinese New Year celebrations.

Zao Jun / Sending Off the Kitchen God Day (China) – A week before the Chinese New Year, tradition holds that families must send the Kitchen God back to heaven to report on the moral behavior of the family. Families send the Kitchen God to heaven by burning an image or symbol of him.

Cultural Events – Mexico / Latin America

Benito Pablo Juárez’s Birthday (Mexico – March 21st) – A Mexican national hero who resisted the French occupation, restored the republic, and helped modernize the country. He served five terms as President of Mexico.

Cinco de Mayo sinko-de-myo (Mexico – May 5th) – A Mexican holiday which commemorates those who overthrew the French occupation forces in 1862.

Día de la Bandera deeah-delah-ban-dera / Flag Day (Mexico – February 24th) – A national holiday commemorating the first pledge of allegiance to the Mexican flag by General Lazaro Cardenas in 1821.
**Día de la Raza** *deeah-delah-rahzah / Day of the Race*  
(Latin America – October 12th) – This day celebrates Columbus’s arrival in the Americas.

**Día de la Revolucion / Revolution Day** (Mexico – November 20th) – This day celebrates the beginning of the Mexican Revolution, which lasted nearly 11 years and killed an estimated 900,000 people.

**Día de los Muertos** *deeah-delas-mwer-toes / Day of the Dead*  
(Mexico – October 31st thru November 2nd) – A holiday honoring the lives of the deceased and the continuation of life.

**Fiesta de Guadalupe** *fee-esta-de-guahd-ah-loopa* (Mexico – December 12th) – A festival commemorating the day in which the Virgin Mary appeared before an indigenous Mexican, Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin, and instructed him to build a church on the Hill of Tepeyac.

**Pan American Day** (Latin America – April 14th) – A day set aside to observe the relationships between America and the Latin American nations.

**Tiradentes Day** (Brazil – April 21st) – A day commemorating Jose da Silva Xavier, who led a Brazilian independence movement against Portugal. He was executed on this day in 1792.

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**Cultural Events – Western Europe**

**Bastille** *bass-steel Day* (France – July 14th) – A French national holiday that commemorates the beginning of the French Revolution with the overthrow of the Bastille prison.

**Boxing Day** (United Kingdom – December 26th) – A public holiday celebrated in the United Kingdom the day after Christmas.
**Cabrillo Day** (Portugal – September 25th) – This day honors Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, an explorer noted for his exploration of the west coast of North America in 1542.

**Camões ka-moysh Day** (Portugal – June 10th) – This day honors one of Portugal’s greatest poets, Luis Vaz de Camões, who is best remembered for his epic poem “Os Lusiadas.”

**Flemish Community Holiday** (Belgium – July 11th) – This day commemorates the Battle of the Golden Spurs, where the Flemish defeated knights of the King of France in 1302, assuring the region’s independence.

**Human Rights Day** (United Nations – December 10th) – This day commemorates the first global enunciation of human rights which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948.

**International Day of Peace** (United Nations – September 21st) – Inspired by the Christmas truce during WWI, the United Nations General Assembly asks all nations and people to honor this as a day of cease-fire and non-violence.

**Koninginnedag / Queen’s Day** (Netherlands – April 30th) – A national holiday in celebration of the Dutch monarchy.

**Lughnasadh / Lammas Day** (Celtic Pagan and Wiccan) – One of four main festivals of the medieval Irish calendar, which is celebrated at the time of the ripening of the berry crop.

**Malvinas Day** (Falkland Islands – April 2nd) – A day set aside to honor soldiers killed during the Falklands War in 1982.

**Sjomannadagur / Seafarers’ Day** (Iceland – June) – A holiday honoring sailors, fishermen and the sea, which are all very important to Iceland’s history and economy.
**St. George’s Day** (England – April 23rd) – Considered to be England’s National Day, St. George was a Roman soldier who protested against the Roman’s torture of Christians and died for his beliefs.

**St. Knut’s Day** (Sweden and Finland – January 13th) – A Scandinavian holiday in celebration of King Knut, who ruled Denmark from 1080-1086 and claimed the throne of England.

**St. Nicholas Day** (Netherlands – December 6th) – A holiday in celebration of Saint Nicholas (Santa Claus), who was renowned for his great kindness and generous aid to those in distress.

**St. Patrick’s Day** (Ireland – March 17th) – A public holiday honoring the patron saint of Ireland, who helped convert pagans to Christianity.

**Victory Day** (France – May 8th) – A day commemorating the defeat of the German army in 1945.

**Cultural Events – Pacific Islands**

**Bunka No Hi / Culture Day** (Japan – November 3rd) – This national holiday promotes culture, the arts, and academic endeavors.

**Golden Week** (Japan – April 29 thru May 5) – A week containing six public holidays.

**Hina Matsuri hee-nah math-soo-lee / Doll Festival / Girls’ Day** (Japan – March 3rd) – A social festival where families and friends gather and display sets of ornamental dolls representing the Emperor, Empress, attendants and musicians in traditional dress.
Keiro No Hi / Respect for the Aged Day
(Japan – September 17th) – An annual holiday celebrated to honor elderly citizens and their longevity.

Kinro Kansha No Hi / Labor Thanksgiving Day
(Japan – November 23rd) – A national holiday that commemorates the labor and production of those who work.

Kodomo No Hi / Children’s Day (Japan – May 5th) – A national holiday that takes place during Golden Week and celebrates the happiness and personalities of children. (See Golden Week)

National Heroes’ Day (Philippines) – Celebrated on the last Sunday in August, this day honors those who have achieved greatness.

People Power Revolution (Philippines – February 22nd thru February 25th) – A day commemorating the non-violent demonstration that led to the downfall of President Ferdinand Marcos.

Philippine-American Friendship Day (Philippines – July 4th) – A day commemorating the liberation of the Philippines by American forces from Japanese occupation at the end of WWII.

Seijin No Hi / Coming of Age Day (Japan) – Celebrated on the second Monday in January, it is a festival honoring those who turned 20 years old that year, which is considered to be the age of adulthood.

Setsubun / Bean Scattering Festival (Japan – February 3rd) – Meaning “seasonal division,” it is celebrated to mark the end of winter and the beginning of spring. The most traditional custom of this celebration is the throwing or scattering of beans to chase away evil spirits.
Shichi-Go-San *she-chi-go-sun / Seven, Five, Three Festival* (Japan) – Celebrated on the weekend nearest November 15th, this festival is a day of prayer for the healthy growth of girls who are 3 and 7 years old, and boys who are 3 and 5 years old.

**Shumbun No Hi / Vernal Equinox Day** (Japan – March 21st) – A public holiday celebrating the arrival of spring and the beginning of a new season of crops.

**Taiiku No Hi / Health and Sports Day** (Japan) – Celebrated on the second Monday in October, this national holiday commemorates the 1964 Tokyo Olympics and nurtures physical and mental health.

**Tenno Tanjo Bi’s Birthday** (Japan – December 23rd) – A national holiday honoring the present emperor’s birthday.

**Umi No Hi / Marine Day** (Japan) – Observed on the third Monday in July, this holiday celebrates the nation’s maritime prosperity and the benefits of the sea.

**Valor Day / Day of Valor / Bataan Day** (Philippines – April 9th) – A day marking the anniversary of the forced three day, 62 mile march of prisoners of war in the Philippines in 1942. Of approximately 75,000 POWs, 10,000 died on the way.

**Cultural Events – Central and Eastern Europe**

**German Unity Day** (Germany – October 3rd) – A national holiday commemorating the anniversary of German’s reunification in 1990.

**Day of Statehood / Statehood Day** (Lithuania – July 6th) – A public holiday commemorating the crowning of Mindaugas as the first king of Lithuania.
Day of Defenders / Defenders of the Motherland Day  
(Russia – February 23rd) – This day honors those who are serving or have served in the Armed Forces.

Victory Day (Russia, Ukraine – May 9th) – A day commemorating the defeat of the German army and honoring those who died during WWII.

Cultural Events – Middle East / South Asia

Gandhi gahn-dee Jayanti / Mahatma Gandhi’s Birthday  
(India – October 2nd) – A national holiday honoring Mahatma Gandhi, a major political and spiritual leader of the Indian independence movement.

National Day (Kuwait – February 25th and 26th) – A two-day holiday commemorating the creation of Kuwait’s nationhood in 1961.

Noh Ruz now-rooz / Noruz (Afghanistan, Iran – March 21st) – The traditional New Year in many Middle Eastern and Central Asian countries which marks the first day of spring.

Sadeh / Jashan-e Sadeh (Iran) – A mid-winter festival celebrated 50 days before Noh Ruz. (See Noh Ruz)

Shaheed Dibash / Martyrs’ Day (Bangladesh – February 21st) – This day commemorates the students and youths who protested against the imposition of the language Urdu by the government of Pakistan, which was viewed as a conspiracy against the Bangali people and their culture.

Yom Hazikaron / Soldiers Memorial Day (Israel) – Preceding the celebration of Israel’s Independence Day, this national holiday honors the soldiers who have lost their lives defending the state of Israel.
RELIGIOUS EVENTS – Christian / Roman Catholic

**Advent** (Christian) – Occurring four Sundays before Christmas and literally meaning “the coming,” this holiday is celebrated in preparation of the Christmas season.

**All Saints Day** (Christian) – Celebrated on November 1st in Western churches, and on the first Sunday after Pentecost in Eastern churches, this day honors all saints of the church, known and unknown. (See Pentecost)

**All Souls Day** (Christian) – A holiday which falls on the day after All Saints Day and commemorates all the faithful (baptized) departed souls that might not have reached heaven yet.

**Ascension Day** (Christian, Coptic Orthodox Christian, Eastern Orthodox Christian) – Observed 40 days after Easter, this is one of the most important Christian holidays, which commemorates Jesus Christ’s ascension to heaven.

**Ash Wednesday** (Christian) – This day marks the first day of Lent, which occurs 46 days before Easter. (See Lent)

**Christmas** (Christian – December 25th) – An annual holiday celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, in which people exchange cards and gifts with one another.

**Easter** (Christian, Coptic Orthodox Christian, Eastern Orthodox Christian) – Observed between late March and late April on the first Sunday following the full moon that occurs on or following the spring equinox, this holiday celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**Epiphany / Three Kings Day** (Christian – January 6th) – One of the oldest festival days of the Christian church, which commemorates the first manifestation of God into human form, Jesus Christ.
Feast of Corpus Christi (Roman Catholic) – Latin for “Body of Christ,” this day is assigned to the Thursday following Trinity Sunday and commemorates The Last Supper of Jesus Christ and his apostles.

Feast of the Immaculate Conception (Roman Catholic – December 8th) – This day celebrates the belief that the Blessed Virgin Mary was born free from original sin.

Feast of the Assumption / Assumption of the Virgin Mary (Roman Catholic, Christian – August 15th) – This day commemorates the Blessed Virgin Mary’s assumption into heaven.

Good Friday / Holy Friday (Christian) – Celebrated on the Friday before Easter, it is a holy day observed to commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Great Lent (Coptic Orthodox Christian) – Also known as the Great Fast, it is mostly observed by Eastern Christians and prepares them for the great feast of Easter.

Lent (Christian) – The 40 day period of fasting between Ash Wednesday and Holy Saturday which commemorates the 40 days Jesus Christ spent in the wilderness, the 40 days Moses spent on Mount Sinai, the 40 days Elijah spent walking to Mount Horeb, and the 40 days of rain in the Story of Noah.

Palm Sunday (Christian, Eastern Orthodox Christian) – Celebrated on the sixth and last Sunday of Lent, or the Sunday before Easter, this day commemorates the beginning of Holy Week.

Pentecost / Whit Sunday (Christian, Coptic Orthodox Christian, Eastern Orthodox Christian) – Celebrated on the seventh Sunday after Easter, it commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus Christ’s disciples.
The Annunciation (Christian – March 25th) – This day commemorates the day God sent the angel Gabriel to tell Mary of Galilee that she would give birth to baby Jesus.

Trinity Sunday (Christian) – The first Sunday after Pentecost celebrating the Trinity, or the three persons of God: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (See Pentecost)

Religious Events – Baha’i

Baha’u’llah Day (November 12th) – This day commemorates the anniversary of the birth of Baha’u’llah, prophet and founder of the Baha’i faith.

Festival of Ridvan (April 21st) – A twelve-day festival commemorating Baha’u’llah’s announcement of his claim to prophet-hood.

Martyrdom of the Bab (July 9th) – Commemorated as a solemn holy day by Baha’is around the world for the imprisonment and execution of the Bab in 1850.

Religious Events – Buddhist

Bodhi boe-dee Day – Traditionally celebrated on December 8th, this holiday commemorates the day Buddha attained enlightenment and complete happiness.

Buddha’s Birthday (April 8th) – This day celebrates the birth of Siddhartha Gautama, the spiritual teacher from ancient India who founded Buddhism.
Nirvana Day – A festival commemorating the day of Buddha’s death and his attainment of Nirvana. It is celebrated on the day of the full moon in February (usually the 15th).

Religious Events – Hindu / Jain / Sikh

Dussehra da-sheerah / Mohani Nakha – A festival celebrated across India on the tenth day of the Hindu month Ashminina, in honor of the “Spirit of Goodness” and the coming of winter.

Diwali dee-wahl-ee / Deepavali – Known as the “Festival of Lights,” this holiday is celebrated for five consecutive days at the end of the Hindu month of Ashwayuja, and symbolizes the triumph of good over evil.

Guru Nanak Ji’s Birthday (Sikh – November 24th) – This day commemorates the birth of the founder of Sikhism.

Holi – A two day festival which falls according to the Hindu calendar. It is a festival of colors and it signifies the coming of spring.

Janmaashtami john-mâsh-tommy / Birth of Lord Krishna (September 4th) – Also called Krishna Janmaashtami, this festival celebrates the birth of Krishna and the incarnation of Vishnu.

Karva Chauth – Celebrated on the fourth night after the full moon in the month of Kartik in the Hindu calendar, women fast for 24 hours to show their love and devotion to their husbands.
Maha Shivaratri ma-ha-sheevah-rahtree / Shiva’s Night – Celebrated on the 13th night and 14th day of the month Maagha in the Hindu calendar, this festival honors Lord Shiva, the supreme God of Shaivism.

Rama Navami rama-na-vamee – Celebrated on the ninth day of the Hindu lunar year, it commemorates the birth of Rama, the king of ancient India.

Vaisakhi vye-sak-hee / New Year (Hindu, Jain, Sikh) – Celebrated on the first day of the Vaisakh month in the Nanakshahi calendar.

Religious Events – Islam / Muslim

Ashura (Islam) – Observed on the tenth day of the Muharram, this day marks the mourning for the martyrdom of Husayn ibn Ali, the grandson of Muhammad at the Battle of Karbala in the year 680 AD.

Eid ul-Adha eyed-al-ahdha (Islam) – A religious festival that is four days long and starts on the tenth day of the lunar Islamic calendar, it commemorates Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son Ismael for God.

Eid ul-Fitr eyed-al-fîteer (Islam) – A holiday marking the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting. (See Ramadan)

Hajj hâj (Islam) – The name for the annual pilgrimage to the city of Mecca, which Muslims are required to make at least once in their life.
**Laylat al-Qadr** (Islam, Muslim) – Literally meaning “The Night of Measures,” this festival celebrates what Muslims believe was the night God sent down the first verses of the Qur’an and the night it was first communicated to Muhammad.

**Mawlid an-Nabi** (Islam) – This is the celebration of the final prophet of Islam, Muhammad. Sunnis celebrate it on the 12th of Rabi-ul-Awwal, and Shi’a Muslims celebrate it on the 17th.

**Muharram** moo-har-um (Islam) – The first month of the Islamic calendar and the start of the New Year. It is held to be the most sacred month of all the year and it is therefore unlawful to fight during this time.

**Ramadan** rahm-ah-dahn (Islam – The Month of Fasting) – Celebrated during the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, it is a time for prayers, fasting, charity, and contemplation.

**Shab-e-Barat** (Islam/Muslim) – Celebrated on the 13th or 14th day of Shaban (the eighth month of the Muslim year), it commemorates the time God writes the destinies of all men for the coming year based upon their deeds of the past.

**Shab-i-Miraj** (Islam/Muslim) – Celebrated on the 27th day of Rajab, it commemorates the day Muhammad ascended to heaven and reached a closeness to God.

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**Religious Events – Jewish**

**Hanukkah** hah-noo-kah – An eight day holiday beginning on the 25th day of Kislev, which celebrates the triumphs of ancient Jewish religious and military heroes.
**Hoshanah Rabbah** – Celebrated on the seventh day of the Sukkot holiday, it commemorates the final sealing of judgment which begins on Rosh Hashanah. (See *Sukkot* and *Rosh Hashanah*)

**Lag B’Omer** – Meaning the 33rd day of the Counting of the Omer, it is a minor holiday that is observed between Passover and Shavuot. (See *Passover* and *Shavuot*)

**Passover** – Celebrated on the 15th day of Nisan on the Hebrew calendar, it commemorates the Exodus and the freedom of the Israelites from ancient Egypt.

**Purim poor-im / Feast of Lots** (March 4th) – A holiday commemorating the rescue of the Jews who were living under the authority of the Persian Empire resulting from Babylonian captivity.

**Rosh Hashanah rawsh-ha-shaw-naw** – Commonly known as the Jewish New Year, it occurs on the first and second days of the Jewish month of Tishri.

**Shavuot sha-voo-oat / Festival of Weeks** – Occurring on the sixth day of the Hebrew month of Sivan, it marks the conclusion of the Counting of the Omer and the day the Torah was given at Mount Sinai.

**Simchat Torah** – A term meaning “rejoicing with the Torah,” this festival takes place in mid-to-late October and commemorates the annual reading of the Torah. (See *Sukkot*)

**Sukkot sue-coat / Sukkoth** – Also known as the Feast of Booths, it is a festival occurring in autumn on the 15th day of the month of Tishri and lasting for seven days. The name refers to the temporary dwellings followers are to construct and live in during this holiday.
**Tisha B’Av** (July 24th) – A day of fasting commemorating the two saddest days in Jewish history: the destruction of the First Temple, and the destruction of the Second Temple. It is annually celebrated in July or August.

**Yom Hashoah / Holocaust Memorial Day** – Celebrated on the 27th day of the month Nisan in the Hebrew calendar, it is a memorial day for the six million Jews who were killed in the Holocaust.

**Yom Kippur** *yom-kîpoor* – Celebrated on the tenth day of the Hebrew month of Tishri, this is a day of atonement and repentance and is considered one of the most holy and solemn days of the year.

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**Religious Events – Rastafarian**

**Haile Selassie’s hi-lee sa-lass-ee Birthday** (July 23rd) – Commemorating the birth of the Emperor of Ethiopia, who is more widely remembered by the Rastafari movement which was founded in Jamaica in the early 1930s.

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**Religious Events – Pagan / Wiccan**

**Samhain** *saw-vain* (November 1st) – A festival which celebrates the end of the harvest season in Gaelic culture, and is generally regarded as the New Year.
Religious Events – Miscellaneous

**Feast of the Throne** (Morocco – July 30th) – Commemorating the day the Moroccan King Muhammad VI accessed the throne in 1999.

**Las Posadas los-pos-ahdîs** (Mexico – December 16th thru December 24th) – Spanish for “the inn” or “a dwelling,” this nine-day celebration commemorates what people believe Mary and Joseph endured before finding a place to stay before giving birth to Jesus Christ.

**Mahavir Jayanti / Jain** (India) – Celebrated in late March or early April, this is one of the most important holidays in Jainism and it celebrates the birth of Mahavira.

**Octave of Easter** – Also known as Low Sunday, it is the Sunday after Easter Sunday and refers to the eighth and final day of the feast.

**Santo Christo Day** (Portugal) – The Feast of Senhor Santo Cristo begins on the fifth Sunday after Easter. Thousands of people fill the lighted streets and begin the feast by blessing bread and meat, which are distributed to the poor.

**Sprengidagur / Bursting Day / Shrove Tuesday** (Iceland) – Celebrated on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, which is marked with the eating of salt meat and peas. (See Ash Wednesday)

**St. Lucia Day / St. Lucy’s Day** (Denmark, Norway, Sweden – December 13th) – A holiday marking the beginning of the Christmas season in Scandinavia.
**LAW**

**ADA** – (See Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990)

**Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1964 (ADEA)** – A federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of age by employers of 20 or more employees against people over 40.

**Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990** (United States – July 26th) – Prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment by state and local governments, in public accommodations and in telecommunications.

**Anti-Discrimination Action of 1991** – An Act which makes racial, sexual and other types of discrimination unlawful in certain circumstances, and promotes equal opportunity between all persons.

**BIA** – Bureau of Indian Affairs.

**Brown v. Board of Education** (1954) - A U.S. Supreme Court decision that is often considered the legal start of the black civil rights movement. It declared the segregationist policy of “separate but equal” unconstitutional and ordered the integration of public schools.

**Civil Rights Act of 1964** – A comprehensive federal law that makes it illegal to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex and national origin.

**Civil Rights** – Personal rights that are guaranteed and protected by the Constitution, such as freedom of speech and the press, and freedom from discrimination.

**Civil Rights Act of 1991** – This act amends the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by adding the protected category of “disability” and provides for appropriate remedies for intentional discrimination and unlawful harassment in the work place.
**Class** – A category or division based on economic status. Members of a certain class are assumed to possess similar cultural, political and/or economic characteristics.

**Class Action** – A civil lawsuit brought by one or more individuals on behalf of themselves and others who may be in a similar situation. The purpose is to secure a judicial remedy, compensate them for the effects of that wrong, and provide remedy for others who have suffered as a result of the same practice.

**Department of Labor (DoL)** – Administrative agency of the federal government in charge of administering and enforcing employment laws.

**Disability Discrimination Act of 1992 (DDA)** – The bases of this Act are:

(a) to eliminate discrimination against people on the grounds of disability in the areas of:
   (i) work, accommodation, education, access to premises, clubs and sport; and
   (ii) the provision of goods, facilities, services and land; and
   (iii) existing laws; and
   (iv) the administration of Commonwealth laws and programs; and

(b) to ensure that people with disabilities have the same rights to equality before the law as the rest of the community; and

(c) to promote recognition and acceptance within the community of the principle that persons with disabilities have the same fundamental rights as the rest of the community.

**DRC** – Disability Rights Commission.
EEO-4 Report – An annual report which state and local government employers must file with the EEOC regarding the sex and minority status of their work force by job category and salary intervals.

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) – Gives all people the right to be considered for any job for which they are skilled and qualified, and ensures that the best suited candidate is offered the job.


Equal Employment Opportunity Coordinating Council (EEOCC) – The coordinating body established under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in its amendment by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972. It is composed of the Secretary of Labor, the Chairman of the EEOC, the Attorney General, and the Chairman of the U.S. Civil Service Commission, and is responsible for maximizing effort, promoting efficiency, and eliminating conflict, competition, duplication and inconsistency within the operations of federal agencies with compliance responsibilities in equal employment opportunity.

Equal Opportunity For Women in the Workplace Act of 1999 – An Act requiring employers to promote equal opportunity for women in employment.

Equal Pay Act of 1963 – A federal law that bars employers from paying different wages to men and women who are performing equal work.
Fourteenth Amendment – The amendment that prohibits states from abridging rights granted to all U.S. citizens, born or naturalized. It also guarantees that no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, and that all persons shall be guaranteed equal protection under the law.

Free Exercise Clause of First Amendment – The clause that prohibits the government from preventing the free exercise of religious beliefs among its citizens.

Glass Ceiling Act of 1991 – An act imposed to raise awareness regarding the underutilization of women and minorities within the U.S. workforce.


Illegal Immigration – Refers to the immigration of people across national borders in a way that violates the immigration laws of the country they’re entering.

Mandatory Retirement Age Law of 1978 – A statute which prohibits employers from having policies that call for mandatory retirement of employees under the age of 70.

National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) – Passed in 1935, this Act provides that all employees have the right to form, join and assist labor organizations and to bargain collectively with their employers.

Older Workers Benefit Protection Act (OWBPA) of 1990 – This Act amended the ADEA by prohibiting all employers from age discrimination by providing equal benefits for older and younger workers or by spending an equal amount on benefits for both groups.

Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA) of 1978 – An amendment to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibiting discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth or conditions requiring pregnancy to be treated as a temporary disability.

Quotas – Approved hiring and promoting of specified numbers or ratios of protected class individuals.

Sex Discrimination Act of 1984 – This revision of the 1975 Act eliminates: discrimination involving dismissal of employees on grounds of family responsibilities; and discrimination involving sexual harassment in the work place and in other areas of public activity.

United States Commission on Civil Rights – Bipartisan agency directed to: Investigate discrimination complaints; Study and collect information concerning legal developments of discrimination; Appraise laws and policies with respect to discrimination; Serve as an information source in respect to discrimination; Submit reports, findings and recommendations to the President and Congress.

University of California v. Bakke (1978) – A U.S. Supreme Court decision that declared racial quotas to be unconstitutional but endorsed other forms of affirmative action. It reasoned that society and students benefit when colleges and universities have a diverse student body.
Vicarious Liability – An anti-discrimination law which states that an employer may be legally responsible for any discrimination and harassment which occurs in the workplace unless there is proof that ‘all reasonable steps’ have been taken to reduce this liability.
RIGHTS AND RESOURCES

**Ability** – The skill or competence needed to perform certain tasks.

**Accessibility** – The extent to which an employer’s facility is easily accessible and does not inhibit the mobility of individuals with disabilities.

**Adaptive Equipment** – The materials and appliances used to help people with disabilities conduct normal activities.

**Adverse Action** – Any act by an employer that results in an individual or group being deprived of their rights.

**Adverse Impact** – Under the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures of the Equal Employment Opportunity Coordinating Council (EEOCC), “Adverse impact may be found when a selection process for a particular job or group of jobs results in the selection of members of any racial, ethnic, or sex group at a lower rate than members of other groups.”

**Adverse Treatment** – Any action that deprives an individual of an employment or educational opportunity, or affects their status negatively.

**Affected Class** – Individuals who are protected by anti-discrimination laws but still suffer the effects of past discrimination.

**Affirmative Action** – Specific actions or efforts in recruitment, hiring, upgrading and other areas designed to improve the employment or educational opportunities of members of minority groups and women.

**Affirmative Action Plan** – A written document assuring that all people have equal opportunities in recruitment, selection, promotion, training, discipline and related employment areas.
**Affirmative Recruitment** – Special recruitment efforts taken to assure that qualified protected class members are well-represented in the applicant pools for positions from which they have been previously excluded or underrepresented.

**Annual Goal** – An annual target for the placement of protected class members in jobs where underutilization exists.

**Applicant** – A person seeking work with a certain employer who meets the prescribed standards, as defined by the employer.

**Applicant Flow** – The number of applicants applying for a particular job over a certain period of time.

**Applicant Flow Log** – A record of applicants who applied for employment or promotion. The data includes their name, race, national origin, gender, referral source, date of application, job title applied for and disposition.

**Applicant Pool** – The collection of candidates who have applied for a particular job or group of jobs during a given period of time.

**Architectural Barriers** – The physical design of a building or facility which prevents or inhibits people with physical disabilities from accessing or freely using it.

**Artificial Barrier** – A non-job related employment consideration which excludes from consideration for employment those who are otherwise capable of doing the work.

**Assistive Technology** – Technology used to provide people with disabilities the opportunity to access information, provide mobility and communication, and help control their environment.

**Auxiliary Aids** – Defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as including a wide range of communication services and devices that are used by people with hearing, speech and vision disabilities.
**Availability** – The percentage of minorities or women among persons in the relevant workforce area who have the qualifications to perform the positions included in the job group.

**Barrier** – Invisible or visible obstacles to equity in workplace opportunities.

**Barrier Analysis** – The process of reviewing an organization’s policies in order to identify and eliminate obstacles in the recruitment, selection, transfer or promotion of minorities and women.

**Blended Workforce** – A workforce composed of full-time, part-time, and temporary employees and independent contractors.

**Bona Fide Occupational Qualification** (BFOQ) – A minimum qualification needed to perform the duties of a particular job, which would otherwise be unlawful because of its discriminatory impact based on one’s sex, religion, or national origin, etc.

**Business Case** – A justification of equality and diversity initiatives based upon economic rationality.

**Business Necessity** – A legitimate business plan or purpose that justifies a practice as valid and necessary for effectively achieving the organization’s objectives.

**C-Suite** – A term used to describe members of an organization’s executive team (i.e., CEO, CFO, CIO, COO).

**Career Ladder** – A hierarchy of jobs consisting of a series of more complex duties and responsibilities within a general occupational area.

**Climate Survey** – An assessment of an organization’s cultural environment which may reflect internal and external perceptions, needs, concerns and/or resources.
Comparable Worth – Payment of wages based on the value of the work performed while taking into consideration factors such as education, training, skills, experience, effort, responsibility and working conditions, usually to introduce gender equity.

Complex Adaptive Systems – A group or team of diverse individuals who interact with each other, mutually affect each other, and therefore generate innovative behavior for the system as a whole.

Compliance – Fully meeting the requirements of laws, rules and regulations which mandate nondiscrimination and affirmative action.

Compliance Agency – Any local, state, or federal government agency which administers the laws or regulations of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

Conciliation – An informal communication process focused on getting parties to establish meaningful dialogue, combat rumors and suggest cooperative ways of resolving conflict.

Corrective Action – The correction of deficiencies that were identified during a review of an affirmative action plan.

Demographics – Vital statistics that characterize human populations such as age, gender, ethnicity, income, education, etc.

Designated Groups – Social groups such as minorities, women and people with disabilities whose individual members have been denied equal access to employment, education, social services, etc., because of membership in the group.

Desk Audit – A review of a contractor’s documents and materials to determine compliance with affirmative action practices and equal employment obligations as they relate to workforce structure.
Developmental Disabilities – A severe disability of an individual that is attributable to mental or physical impairment, is manifested before the individual attains the age of 22, and is likely to continue indefinitely.

Diverse Supplier – A U.S. business which is certified as, for example, woman- or minority-owned.

*Diversity Return-on-Investment (DROI) – A process of analyzing, measuring, tracking and reporting specific diversity initiatives to demonstrate their value.

Diversity Scorecard – A balanced group of objectives and measures resulting from an organization’s strategy that links to its diversity strategy.

EAT – Employment Appeal Tribunal.

EEO Groups – Particular groups of people who have traditionally been disadvantaged in employment because of discriminatory laws, rules, employment practices, stereotypes and attitudes.

Eight-Factor Analysis – Current government regulations require that, in performing availability analysis, an organization must consider these eight designated factors:
(See Availability Analysis)

1. the minority population of the labor area surrounding the facility;
2. the size of the minority unemployment force in the labor area surrounding the facility;
3. the percentage of the minority work force as compared with the total work force in the immediate labor area;
4. the general availability of minorities having requisite skills in the immediate labor area;
5. the availability of minorities having the requisite skills in an area in which the contractor can reasonably recruit;
6. the availability of promotable and transferable minorities within the contractor’s organization;  
7. the existence of training institutions capable of training persons in the requisite skills; and,  
8. the degree of training which the contractor is reasonably able to undertake as a means of making all job classes available to minorities.

“Eighty Percent” Rule – Method of determining adverse impact. Selection rates for any group that is less than 80 percent (four-fifths) of the rate for other groups is evidence of a violation of this rule. (See Adverse Impact)

Emotional Competencies / Emotional Quotient (EQ) – Behavioral capabilities that are expressed during emotional situations which allow individuals to cope and react in difficult circumstances in ways that are both effective and constructive for all parties involved.

Employee – A person in the service of another under any contract of hire, in which the employer has the right to control the employee in the manner of how the work is to be performed.

Employee Relations – A term referring to the general management and planning of activities related to developing, maintaining and improving relationships between employees.

Employer – A person or institution that hires employees or workers to perform specific jobs for an agreed-upon hourly wage or salary.

Employment Equity – Equal access to employment and promotion for all culturally diverse groups through an organization’s focus on preventing and/or removing discriminatory barriers in recruitment, hiring, training, retention, etc.
Employment Practice – Any recruitment, hiring, or selection practice, transfer or promotion policy, or benefit of the employment process that operates as an analytical screening device.

EOPs – Equal Opportunity Policies.

Equal Opportunity – The application of human rights principles and laws which help to create a balanced environment for employment, education and the provision of services.

Equal Opportunity Program – A set of policies, guidelines and actions devised to eradicate discrimination and ensure access to and full participation in educational and employment opportunities, housing, health care, and services to the general community.

Equal Opportunity Survey – A report sent to a portion of all non-construction contractors each year requiring them to provide information regarding applicants, hires, promotions, terminations, compensation and tenure by race and gender.

Flex Time – An organizational policy that allows fulltime workers to determine their own schedule of working hours.

Goal Achievement – A process to determine how well an employer has progressed toward meeting their employment and promotion targets for women and minorities.

Goals – Employment objectives in which employers set the amount of progress they expect to make to correct underutilization in their work force.

Good Faith Efforts – Actions developed by contractors to achieve compliance with equal employment opportunity and affirmative action clauses.

Grammar of Conduct – The structure that guides respectful behaviors between an organization’s employees and its customers, clients and other stakeholders.
**Impairment** – A physical or mental condition resulting from injury or illness, and which diminishes an individual’s ability to hear, see, walk, talk, etc.

**Invitation to Self-Identify** – An invitation extended to all employees to identify themselves as having a disability or being a disabled or Vietnam-era veteran.

**Job Group** – A division within an organization’s work force for purposes of analyzing the work force regarding underutilization.

**Labor Force** – The total of all people in the civilian labor force and the armed forces.

**Learning Disability** – Any condition that causes significant difficulties in perceiving and/or processing auditory, visual, or spatial information.

**Life Activity** – Basic functions that are limited by a person’s disability such as caring for oneself or performing everyday manual tasks.

**Mainstreaming** – The inclusion of equality issues in every part of business strategy and policy.

**Managing Diversity** – A comprehensive process for developing an environment that is comfortable for all employees.

**Mediation** – An intervention between conflicting groups or individuals in an effort to restore racial harmony and peaceful relations.

**Merit** – The basis of equal employment opportunity in Australia which ensures that the best person for the job is employed.

**Noncompliance** – Failure to follow equal employment opportunity or affirmative action guidelines and regulations.
Optimal Cultural Climate – The best conditions in which all employees and customers can succeed.

Organizational Assessment – Research and evaluation tools used to collect, analyze, and identify critical issues facing an organization’s success or failure.

Organizational Nihilism – When an organization would rather focus on short-term shareholder gains and values versus employee relations and the cultural climate of the organization.

Organizational Rigidity – A hierarchical organization in which fear is dominant, information is protected, and assimilation is the preferred business model. (See Assimilation)

Organizational Survey – Evaluating and analyzing an organization’s structure and its components to determine whether they are meeting its present and future needs.

Organizational Vitality – A balanced organizational culture that values pluralism, creativity and the quality of human diversity.

Parity – The equivalence of an organization’s protected class work force to that of its relevant available labor force.

Partial Disability – An injury or illness which prevents someone from performing one or more functions of his or her job.

Perceived Disability – A person who does not meet the definition of a disabled individual as set forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act, but who is regarded by their employer as having a mental or physical disability.
**Reasonable Accommodation / Reasonable Adjustment** – The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act of 1986 declared that disabled persons are entitled to “the right to any necessary treatment, rehabilitation, education, training and other services to develop their skills and capacities to the maximum.”

**Relevant Work Force** – All individuals who are qualified and will accept employment for a particular job.

**Religious Accommodation** – Accommodations made for employees so that they may observe a religious holiday or attend a religious ceremony.

**Selection Process** – Any procedure used as a basis for an employment decision (e.g., interviews, performance tests, background checks, etc.).

**Sensory Impairment** – Commonly includes vision and hearing impairments.

**Snapshot** – Workforce data taken at a particular point in time and used as the basis for analysis.

**Target Groups** – Protected groups on which agencies focus their Affirmative Action efforts.

**Timetable** – The time frame in which an employer must achieve his or her employment goals for all affirmative action plans.

**Under-Utilization / Under-Representation** – Used to describe a situation where a lower number of protected class members are employed than would normally be expected. (See Parity)

**Unlawful Employment Practice** – A policy or practice that has discriminatory intent and cannot be shown to be essential to the successful performance of a job.
**Utilization Analysis** – An evaluation of the number of minority or women employees in a job group compared with the number of minorities or women in the relevant labor market.

**Vision Impairment** – Describes a recognizable defect or malfunctioning of one or both of the eyes, ranging from low vision to total blindness.

**Work and Family Programs** – Organizational programs and benefits that are implemented to provide employees with greater flexibility to meet both work and family demands.

**Workforce Analysis** – A comprehensive listing of each job title within an organization, which includes the total number of male and female employees, the total number of them who are Black, Hispanic, Native American or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, and the wage rate or salary range.

**Workforce Diversity / Workplace Diversity** – Recognition of and respect for the variety of differences among workers, such as race, culture, language, age, and gender.

**Work-Life Balance** – Employment policies facilitating the balance of life outside of work.

**Zone Scoring** – A scoring technique which divides candidates into a small number of groups, with all candidates within a group assigned the same score; also known as block, band or category scoring.
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