

MY SCHOOL



ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' FEDERATION OF ONTARIO

I-SPY BOOK BIAS

My School Primary Division

Background

School communities look differently depending on who and where you teach. Educators may need to adjust or modify the lesson to meet the needs of their students and communities. It is important for all educators to use educational materials that reflect diversity, even when those experiences do not reflect the lived experiences of the students you teach. Eliminating discrimination and the removal of bias and barriers in our school communities is part of [Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy](#), The Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009.

Learning Goals

Students will use critical thinking skills to analyze books in the classroom for **racism** and/or **bias**. They will use guiding questions to explore the importance of examining more than one perspective.

Inquiry Goals

I wonder...

- If the books in our classroom reflect the diverse experiences of Ontario's students and their families.
- How I can use my critical thinking skills to analyze books for racism and bias.

- Why it is important for books to be [inclusive](#).



Call for Action

Students will write a letter to the [Step Up Scholastic](#) campaign, expressing why it is important for books to reflect diversity.



Curriculum Expectations

- ✓ Grade 1 Math: Data Management, Language: Writing, Reading, Oral Communication, Media, Visual Arts
- ✓ Grade 2 Math: Data Management, Language: Writing, Reading, Oral Communication, Media, Visual Arts
- ✓ Grade 3 Math: Data Management, Language: Writing, Reading, Oral Communication, Media, Visual Arts

Materials

Technology: Internet access

Copies of articles or links about Marley Dias (See [References](#))

A variety of books in the classroom library

[Check a Book for Bias bookmarks](#)

Scholastic book flyers (optional)

Suggested Prior Knowledge

- Previous classroom discussions about terms relating to [equity](#) and social identities would be beneficial in deepening and giving context to this lesson (e.g., racial/cultural identifiers like South Asian; Black; First Nations, Métis and Inuit; White; etc.)
- Students have had previous experience analyzing infographics and data. *What does the data say? What can we infer? What further questions can we ask?* Are all appropriate prompts to deepen data interrogation?

Lesson Structure

Task Component	Instruction	Assessment Focus
<p>Before (Activation/ Review)</p> <p>Discussion: 15 minutes</p> <p>Marley Dias: 10-20 minutes</p>	<p>Ask: <i>Draw a picture or describe your favourite book character (human).</i></p> <p>After sharing with a partner, ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How would you describe the main character of your favourite book?</i> • <i>What is their racial identity?</i> • <i>How many of our favourite book characters are White? Asian? Latino? Indigenous? Black? South Asian?</i> • <i>What do you notice about the characters we have described?</i> • <i>Whose voices are represented and whose voices are missing?</i> • <i>Why does it matter if the characters in books are racialized and diverse?</i> <p>Introduce students to Marley Dias, a young activist who launched a campaign called <i>#1000BlackGirlBooks</i> in 2015.</p> <p>Read an article or watch a video clip about Marley Dias.</p> <p>Article: Girl's drive to find 1,000 'black girl books' hits target with outpouring of donations, the guardian.</p> <p>Video Clip: Meet Marley Dias, The Force Behind #1000BlackGirlBooks</p> <p>If using the article, a suggestion is to do so as a read aloud or a shared read with the text being available on a screen or with students having their</p>	<p>Success Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can ask questions and share ideas in a group discussion. <p>Questions to Consider for Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are students expressing their ability to honour different perspectives and at the same time, identify race/culture as an often visible indicator? • What is their articulation of terms such as fairness/unfairness, equity/equality, right/just?

Task Component	Instruction	Assessment Focus
	<p>own copy. Pay attention to the level of reading your primary students are at. This article might be most appropriate as a read aloud.</p> <p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did Marley start the campaign #1000BlackGirlBooks? • Have you ever felt like the characters in books did not look like you or your family? • How are they similar or different? • Why is it important for books to be reflective of diverse and racialized experiences? • What is the impact of not seeing different experiences represented in books? <p><i>It is important that even though the focus of this lesson is about the visibility of race as an indicator, students may bring up other identifiers such as gender, family structures, family values, celebrations and activities that may impact on class, abilities, etc. Honour and acknowledge this discussion, building on the understanding that as people, we are made up of many aspects of identities, which may be similar or different from others. Bring the discussion back to race, culture, language and religion/faith as the main focus of the Marley prompt.</i></p>	
<p>During (Working on it)</p> <p>Discussion: 5 minutes</p> <p>Check a Book for Bias: 20-40 minutes</p>	<p>Define “bias” and “prejudice.” Add new vocabulary and definitions to the word wall or an anchor chart. (Glossary)</p> <p>This image may provide a visual to the terminology for students:</p>	<p>Success Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can explain what bias is and what it might look like in texts. • Students can use Critical Literacy skills to investigate a variety of texts for bias. • Students can collect data and record findings.

Task Component	Instruction	Assessment Focus
	<div data-bbox="457 321 751 727"> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stereotype: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A generalization or oversimplified <u>ideas</u> about people, places, or things. • Prejudice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – An unfavorable opinion or <u>feeling</u> formed beforehand without knowledge, thought, or reason. • Discrimination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The <u>act</u> of differential treatment toward a person or group because of a prejudice. <p>Explain: When certain groups of people are included and represented in books, it can influence the way we think about which experiences have value. This is called “bias.”</p> <p>When certain groups of people are excluded or represented in negative ways in books, it can create a negative attitude towards a certain group of individuals within that group, which is not based on fact. This is called “prejudice.”</p> <p>Bias: An opinion, preference or inclination that limits an individual’s or a groups’ ability to make fair, objective or accurate judgements.</p> <p>Prejudice: A set of opinions about or attitudes towards a certain group or individuals within it that casts that groups and its members in an inferior light and for which there is no legitimate basis in fact. Usually a negative</p>	

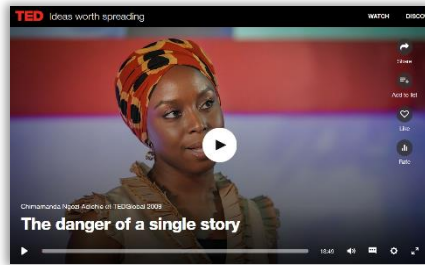
Task Component	Instruction	Assessment Focus
	<p>opinion formed before knowing all the facts.</p> <p>Task: Work in pairs to examine a variety of books in the classroom and check for bias. Use the Check a Book for Bias bookmarks to analyze the books. Record observations and findings about how the characters are represented in a variety of books.</p> <p>Educators may choose to assign different bookmarks to pairs or introduce one bookmark at a time and model using concrete examples.</p> <p>Source: Check a Book for Bias bookmarks: These bookmarks can be found in the <i>Social Justice Begins With Me</i> Resource Guide.</p>	
<p>After (Reflecting/ Constructing/ Consolidating)</p> <p>20-40 minutes</p>	<p>Share the results of your findings with the class in different ways (e.g., orally, visually, in writing). Represent the data using a graphic organizer (e.g., bar graph, tally marks, info-graphic).</p> <p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What did you notice about the books in our classroom?</i> • <i>Were you surprised by the results?</i> • <i>What questions do you have?</i> • <i>What types of identity books do we have more of? Less of?</i> • <i>Why do you think this is so?</i> • <i>Why might it be important to make our classroom more inclusive?</i> • <i>How can we make our classroom library more inclusive?</i> 	<p>Success Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can share results and ask questions about the data they collect.
Individual Practice	Look at The Diversity Gap in Children's Publishing infographic from the open book blog, Lee and Low Books and unpack the data together.	<p>Success Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can read and

Task Component	Instruction	Assessment Focus
Discussion: 10-15 minutes Drama or Poster: 30 minutes	<p>The infographic demonstrates data resulting from the United States of America. This is comparable to what is true in Canada. It is important to discuss the advantages and shortcomings when looking at data that may be of a different context.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can we learn from it? • What might be different in our situation? • Why is it important to use data? <p>Create a poster for the library or write a review for the school newsletter recommending a book with a racialized main character.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Use drama or spoken word poetry to speak “in-role” as a supporting character in a book. Describe how the character might be feeling about the way they are represented and how they wish their story could be told.</p>	<p>analyze data accurately.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can use the elements of Visual Arts and/or Media Literacy techniques to create a poster. • Students can speak “in-role” and use the creative process to express different points of view. • Students can think critically about media texts and the messages within.
Next Steps (Teacher Reflection)	<p>Reflect on the following statements, using “Rarely, Sometimes, Always.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I believe that all children can succeed regardless of cultural background. • I have high expectations of all my students. • I consciously look for texts and resources that reflect diverse social realities and experiences. • I bring in speakers and visitors to our classroom from a range of backgrounds representing various voices. • I ensure that my classroom is a safe environment where discrimination and generalizations about diverse social realities and lived experiences are not tolerated. • I provide examples of the achievements and ideas of diverse authors, 	

Task Component	Instruction	Assessment Focus
	historical figures and current role models to broaden the perspective.	
Call for Action: Letter Writing: 30-40 minutes	<p>Learn about the Step Up Scholastic campaign. Read several examples of letters posted to the website. Write a letter to Scholastic.</p> <p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Who do you think would write a letter to Scholastic?</i> • <i>Do you think that diversity in books is important for all children and families? Why or why not?</i> • <i>How does diversity in books contribute to equality for everyone?</i> <p>Task: Write your own letter to the Step Up Scholastic campaign, expressing why it is important for books to reflect diversity. If your school does not use Scholastic resources, you may choose to write to another book company or book store.</p>	Success Criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can co-construct success criteria and develop a rubric for letter writing. • Students can write a persuasive letter that meets the learning expectations. • Students can use descriptive feedback from peers and/or educators to improve their work.
Extension: 30-40 minutes	<p>Introduce the idea of activism and who can be an ally. An ally is someone who stands in solidarity with others. An activist is someone who organizes and takes action to challenge injustice. There are many different ways to organize and take action, including letter writing, petitions, protests, etc. Encourage students to make connections to their learning about Marley Dias.</p> <p>See the Additional Resources section for suggestions to deepen teacher framework on allyship.</p> <p>Ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What does it mean to be an activist?</i> • <i>What does it mean to be an ally?</i> 	

Task Component	Instruction	Assessment Focus
	<p>Read Aloud: <i>A is for Activist</i> by Innosanto Nagara</p> <p>Task: Write a statement of solidarity and support to display in the classroom or hallway. Use prompts such as, “<i>I am an ally when...</i>” and “<i>I am an activist because...</i>” and “<i>is an activist because...</i>”</p>	

Additional Resources



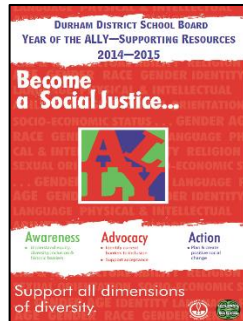
View the TED Talk by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: [The Danger of a Single Story](#)



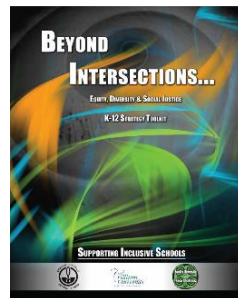
[1000 Black Girl Books Resource Guide](#) (GrassROOTS Community Foundation)



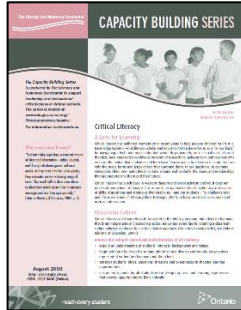
Allies: A Discussion Activity (Teaching Tolerance)



Become a Social Justice Ally: Durham District School Board: Year of the Ally – Supporting Resources 2014-2015 (Durham District School Board)



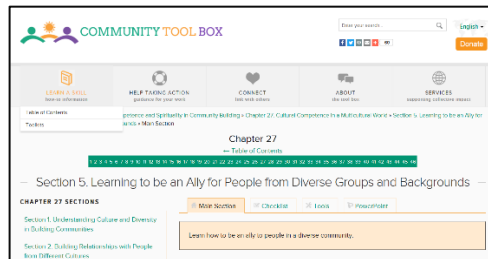
Beyond Intersections... Equity, Diversity and Social Justice, K-12 Strategy Toolkit, (Durham District School Board and Trillium Lakelands District School Board)



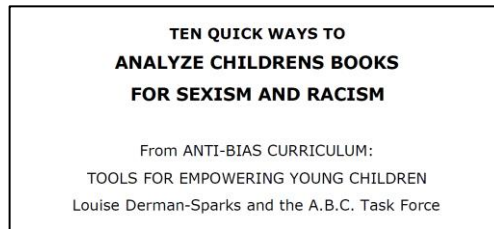
Critical Literacy: A Lens for Learning, Capacity Building Series (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009)



Infographic Series: *The Diversity Gap* (Lee and Low Books)



Learning to be an Ally for People from Diverse Groups and Backgrounds (Community Tool Box)



Ten Quick Ways to Analyze Children's Books for Sexism and Racism, Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children by Louise Derman-Sparks and the A.B.C. Task Force (Teaching for Change, 2012)

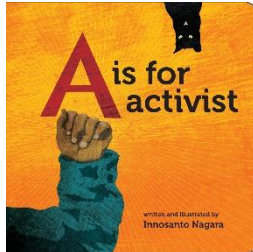


Third Graders Assess and Improve Diversity of Classroom Library (*Teaching for Change, 2016*)



Where's The Color In Kids' Lit? Ask The Girl With 1,000 Books (And Counting) (National Public Radio (NPR), 2016)

References



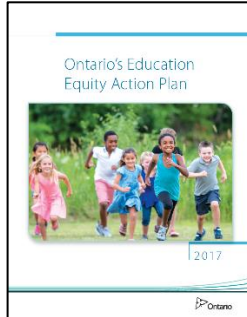
A is for Activist by Innosanto Nagara (Seven Stories Press, 2013)



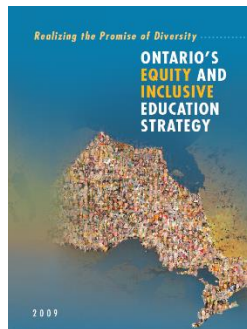
Girls drive to find 1,000 'black girl books' hits target with outpouring of donations (the guardian, 2016)



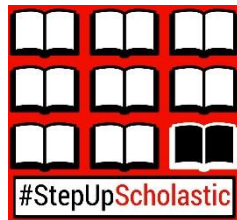
Meet Marley Dias, The Force Behind #1000BlackGirlBooks, (AJ+) YouTube, 2016



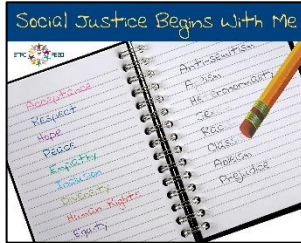
Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009)



Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009)



Step Up Scholastic



Social Justice Begins With Me (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2011)



The Diversity Gap in Children's Publishing, the open book blog (Lee and Low Books, 2015)

GLOSSARY



ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' FEDERATION OF ONTARIO

GLOSSARY

TERM	DEFINITION
Aboriginal peoples	Defined in section 35(2) of the <i>Constitution Act, 1982</i> , s: "... 'Aboriginal peoples of Canada' includes the Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada." Other terms used to encompass these diverse groups include First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI), Indigenous, Native and First Peoples. For the purpose of this resource, Aboriginal and Aboriginal peoples will be used to respectfully acknowledge these original inhabitants of North America.
Activism	The action or policy of using vigorous campaigning to bring about political or social change.
Advocacy	The act or process of supporting a cause.
Affirmative action	Affirmative action policies were developed to address long histories of discrimination faced by minorities and women. This term is primarily in use in the USA. In Canada, we have used the term "employment equity" since the 1980's.
Ally	Someone who works against the oppression of a specific social group(s), even though they do not belong to that group, such as a man who works to end sexism or a White person who stands up against racism. Becoming an ally involves acknowledging your own privilege and taking action towards social justice.
Allyship	Allyship is not an identity – it is a lifelong process of building relationships based on trust, consistency and accountability with marginalized individuals and/or groups of people. Allyship is not self-defined – our work and our efforts must be recognized by the people we seek to ally ourselves with.
Assimilation	The process by which a person or persons acquire the social and psychological characteristics of a dominant or majority group: e.g., "Waves of immigrants have been <i>assimilated</i> into the American culture."

TERM	DEFINITION
Barrier	An obstacle to entry in societal activities, created by the culture of the community or the dominant group, i.e., people's behavior towards newcomers or persons seen as “the other” (e.g., marginalized groups).
Bias	An opinion, preference or inclination that limits an individual's or a group's ability to make fair, objective or accurate judgements.
Class	Class is a relative social rank in terms of income, wealth, education, status/position and/or power.
Community	A group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common; A feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests and goals.
Courageous conversations	<p>Educator Glenn E. Singleton outlines Four Agreements to guide educators, students and community stakeholders when discussing race:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay Engaged; • Expect to Experience Discomfort; • Speak your Truth; and • Expect and Accept a Lack of Closure.

TERM	DEFINITION
Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy (CRRP)	<p>Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy seeks to empower students intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically. Educators who ascribe to this pedagogy foster student voice by:</p> <p><u>Holding high expectations</u> Educators, students, families and community stakeholders work together to create a culture of high expectations in the classroom by engaging in high-yield teaching strategies, consistent assessment and caring relationships.</p> <p><u>Acquiring cultural competence</u> Educators use students' cultures and connections to communities as a vehicle for learning.</p> <p><u>Nurturing critical consciousness</u> Educators provide opportunities for students to critique the cultural norms, values and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities.</p>
Diversity	The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status.
Employment equity	Federal legislation, encouraging the establishment of working conditions that are free of barriers, correcting the conditions of disadvantage in employment and promoting implementation of special measures and the accommodation of differences for the four designated groups in Canada: women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and racialized persons.
Equality	The state or quality of being equal; correspondence in quantity, degree, value, rank or ability.
Equity	A condition or state of fair, inclusive and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.
Eurocentric	Focusing on European culture or history to the exclusion of a wider view of the world; implicitly regarding European culture as preeminent.

TERM	DEFINITION
Exclusion	The state of group disempowerment, degradation and disenfranchisement maintained by systemic barriers and supported by an implicit ideology of superiority.
Fairness	Having or exhibiting a disposition that is free of favouritism or bias; impartial.
First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI)	<p><i>First Nation.</i> A term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word “Indian,” which many found offensive. The term <i>First Nation</i> has been adopted to replace the word “band” in the names of communities.</p> <p><i>Inuit.</i> Aboriginal people in northern Canada, living mainly in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, northern Quebec and Labrador. Ontario has a very small Inuit population. The Inuit are not covered by the Indian Act.</p> <p><i>Métis people.</i> People of mixed First Nation and European ancestry. The Métis history and culture draws on diverse ancestral origins, such as Scottish, Irish, French, Ojibwe and Cree.</p>
Gender expression	The Ontario Human Rights Commission (2012) defines <i>gender expression</i> as: “Gender expression is how a person publicly expresses or presents their gender. This can include behaviour and outward appearance such as dress, hair, make-up, body language and voice. A person’s chosen name and pronoun are also common ways of expressing gender. Others perceive a person’s gender through these attributes.”
Gender identity	The Ontario Human Rights Commission (2012) defines <i>gender identity</i> as: “Gender identity is each person’s internal and individual experience of gender. It is a person’s sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither or anywhere along the gender spectrum. A person’s gender identity may be the same as or different from their birth-assigned sex.”
Identity	The concept a person develops about themselves that evolves over the course of their life. This may include aspects of life that they have no control over, such as where they grew up or the colour of their skin, as well as choices they make in life, such as how they spend their time and what they believe.
Inclusion	Creating an environment where people have both the feeling and reality of belonging and are able to achieve to their full potential.

TERM	DEFINITION
Inclusive	To include all, to be comprehensive.
Infrastructure	Refers to structures, systems and facilities serving the economy of a business, industry, country, city, town or area, including the services and facilities necessary for its economy to function.
Liberation	The act of setting someone free from imprisonment, slavery, oppression.
Marginalized	This term is used to refer to the process of making a group or class of people less important or relegated to a secondary position.
Meritocracy	A social system, society or organization in which people have power because of their abilities, not because of their money or social position.
Mobilize	To make ready for action and movement.
Newcomer	A) A person who is new to Canada who has come here either as an immigrant or refugee. B) A person who is new to a school.

TERM	DEFINITION
The Ontario Human Rights Code 1962 (OHRC)	<p>The <i>Ontario Human Rights Code 1962</i> prohibits discrimination against people based on a protected ground in a protected social area.</p> <p>Protected grounds are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age; • Ancestry, colour, race; • Citizenship; • Ethnic origin; • Place of origin; • Creed; • Disability; • Family status; • Marital status (including single status); • Gender identity, gender expression; • Receipt of public assistance (in housing only); • Record of offences (in employment only); and • Sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding). <p>Protected social areas are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation (housing); • Contracts; • Employment; • Goods, services and facilities; and • Membership in unions, trade or professional associations.
Oppression	How one group is dominated by another, more powerful, individual or group through physical, psychological, social or economic threats or force and frequently by an ideology of dominance.
Power	The capacity or ability to direct or influence the behavior of others or the course of events.

TERM	DEFINITION
Prejudice	A set of opinions about or attitudes towards a certain group or individuals within it that casts that groups and its members in an inferior light and for which there is no legitimate basis in fact. Usually a negative opinion formed before knowing all the facts.
Privilege	“Privilege exists when one group has something of value that is denied to others simply because of the groups they belong to, rather than because of anything they’ve done or failed to do. Access to privilege doesn’t determine one’s outcomes, but it is definitely an asset that makes it more likely that whatever talent, ability, and aspirations a person with privilege has will result in something positive for them.” – Peggy McIntosh
Racialized peoples	Recognizing that race is a social construct, the Ontario Human Rights Commission describes people as “racialized person” or “racialized group” instead of the more outdated and inaccurate terms <i>racial minority</i> , <i>visible minority</i> , <i>person of colour</i> or <i>non-White</i> .
Racism	According to the Ontario Human Rights Commission (2012): “Racism is a belief that one group is superior to others. Racism can be openly displayed in racial jokes, slurs or hate crimes. It can also be more deeply rooted in attitudes, values and stereotypical beliefs. In some cases, people don’t even realize they have these beliefs. Instead, they are assumptions that have evolved over time and have become part of systems and institutions, and also associated with the dominant group’s power and privilege.”
Sexual orientation	A person’s attraction to someone of a different sex, the same sex or both sexes.
Socio-economic status	An economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education and occupation.
Stakeholder	A group/individual that has an interest in a particular issue or project and can affect or be affected by the outcomes.

TERM	DEFINITION
Systemic oppression	Systematic oppression is the mistreatment of people within a social identity group, supported and enforced by the society and its institutions, solely based on the person's membership in the social identity group.
Union or trade union	<p>A union is an organized group of workers who collectively use their strength to have a voice in their workplace. Through a union, workers have a right to impact wages, work hours, benefits, workplace health and safety, job training and other work-related issues. (Los Angeles County Federation of Labor)</p> <p>“trade union” means an organization of employees formed for purposes that include the regulation of relations between employees and employers (Ontario Labour Relations Act)</p>
Unfairness	Lack of equality or justice.
White Privilege	White Privilege is about the concrete benefits of access to resources and social rewards and the power to shape the norms and values of society that Whites receive, unconsciously or consciously, by virtue of their skin colour in a racist society.