

Developing an anti-oppression mindset
The Mennonite Contributor Guidelines
(Developed in 2017; updated June/July 2018)

Developing and using interculturally inclusive and anti-oppressive thinking and language is an ongoing commitment and practice. Before, during and after writing an article, below are some questions and framing to consider:

Audience - Assumptions

1. Who am I envisioning when I write this article?
 - a. Who you envision to be the intended audience shapes the article
 - b. e.g.: people who share your cultural, ethnic or racial, language background or broader audiences
 - i. If a broader audience is intended, be sure to:
 1. Explain acronyms, your worldview, values, perceptions, norms, behaviors
 - c. Clearly identify your own worldview lens and know that you will need to ask questions about your own lens
 - i. Whose eyes and ears am I hearing this story through? Does the content match what I know from my own life experience?

Story - Ownership

1. Whose story am I writing?
 - a. My own story? Or someone else's story?
 - b. If it is someone else's story, do I have permission to write their story?
 - i. Are they situated as a subject rather than an object in the story?
 - ii. Did they contribute to writing the article?
 - iii. Did they read it before I submitted it?

Labeling - Terminology

1. What labels were used to identify people/groups in the article? Why? Is this how they self-identify?
 - a. Examples of ways of identifying:
 - i. Hispanic, Latino(a), Latinx



- ii. Black, African American, Caribbean American
- iii. Arab, Syrian, Iraqi
- iv. Asian, Korean, Asian American, Indian
- v. Queer, Gay, Transgender, Cisgender, Heterosexual
- vi. White, European, Caucasian
- vii. Indigenous, Native, Native American, Cherokee, Lakota

Glossary of Terms <https://www.cssp.org/about/race-equity/GLOSSARY-OF-TERMS.pdf>

Locating Self & Story - Worldview

1. Locate yourself and your story/article. Do not assume that your audience knows the geographical location or context and its implications of where you or your story are located.
 - a. E.g., “My congregation is in the Plains conference.” “Our church is a typical, Mennonite community”
 - b. Use descriptors like; urban, rural, suburban.
 - c. Identify the racial, ethnic makeup of your community.

Class Implications

1. Do not be afraid to situate and name the class implications of the article
 - a. What assumptions are held about class, education?
 - i. E.g., I am writing this for the middle class educated person who grew up in a two-parent household, intact, with 1-3 siblings.
 1. Possible assumptions: homeowners, generational college graduates, skilled labor force, English as a first language families only have middle class status
 - ii. Are the suggestions I provided relevant across class realities/barriers?
 1. E.g.: All congregations can implement greener practices, such as, putting on a green roof, solar panels, community gardens or composting program, only sourcing your food for community meals from organic providers.

Imagery

1. What images come to mind that you think would represent or correlate with the theme of your article?
 - a. How would an image provide framing for the context of your article? How would the images resonate with the readers?
 - b. Would the image(s) you think of have a different reception or evoke different feelings across cultural and socioeconomic lines? Do they convey a message that isolates certain people from connecting to your article?
 - c. Does the image(s) you suggest accurately depict yourself, context, and the content?
 - d. Who or what is being centered in the image(s)?

General considerations before submission

- Does my language exclude a group?
- Did I explain my context?
- Did I ask someone from a different context to review my article *and* incorporate any feedback?
- Who benefits from reading this article?
- Who do I want to benefit from this article?
- Am I only speaking about what I know rather than what I *think* I know?
- Whose words and stories am I using? Did I get permission?