



BERKELEY JOURNAL OF

Gender, Law & Justice

Style Guide

This guide outlines the publication standards for Berkeley Journal of Gender, Law & Justice (BGLJ) and is intended for use by authors and editors alike.

In an effort to publish diverse scholarship and foster a more inclusive legal community, BGLJ has centered person-first language throughout this style guide. Because conditions of inequality are continually changing, this style guide will be a living document and will be updated in continued consultation with those communities affected by the law and our scholarship.

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General Rules about Language

Identity is personal. If an author has a particular opinion about identity (i.e. nominative language; not capitalizing White; etc.) then editors will allow them to write using that preference. In most instances, it will be helpful for the author to include a footnote as to why they have chosen to use a particular term.

Articles should use in-group identifiers, including spelling, specificity, capitalization.

BGLJ uses gender neutral language whenever possible, preferring “they” over “she” or “he” when used in the singular.

Grammar

BGLJ adheres to the twentieth edition of The Bluebook (BB) for all citations, including the principles dictating explanatory parentheticals. For all text BGLJ adheres to the principles in the most recent edition of The Chicago Manual of Style (CMS). This includes text that appears in a footnote outside of an explanatory parenthetical.

For reference, we have included a few of the most commonly used CMS rules:

- Single space after periods
- Use the past tense to describe what judges and academics have written.
- Use the Oxford comma for series. CMS 6.19
- Whenever it would aid clarity, use active voice. CMS 5.118
- If confused about punctuation going inside or outside of quotation marks, see CMS 6.9 - 6.11.
- If confused about forming possessives, see CMS 7.16 - 7.19.
- If using percentages, please review CMS 9.18.
- If confused about “that v. which” see CMS 6.27 (or google that v. which and read grammarly’s explanation)
- Authors often overuse the comma. Review CMS 6.16 and following rules around commas to ensure this use is not unnecessary.

Quotations and Court-Specific Language

BGLJ’s preference is not to change words quoting legal text. When offensive words are used in a quote, please include a footnote that explains the history of that word and why it is not being omitted from the quote.

In some instances, it may be necessary to use words relied on in judicial opinions. For example, the phrase “homosexual behavior” continues to appear in judicial decisions and conveys much more than simple sexual orientation. In such instances, as a particular word is necessary to convey a particular idea or group a line of cases, authors may keep the word or phrase and include a footnote to explain the history of the word and why it is being used in the article.

Descriptions of Geographic Locations

When discussing international development and differentiating the economic, political, and social statuses of other countries, use descriptors instead of terminology. Avoid terms like “the Global South,” “Third World,” and “underdeveloped” that either inaccurately label countries or ignore the colonial exploitation that led to the countries’ economic stratification. Instead, describe the reason for reference, such as “politically liberal” or “high GDP.”

Descriptions of Individuals and Groups of People

Class and Socioeconomic Status

Socioeconomic status and social class encompass not only income, but other identifiers such as educational attainment, employment status, and housing arrangements. We encourage the use of precise and sensitive language, which means avoiding racially charged and derogatory terminology, and using person-first language when possible.

Offensive	Suggested Alternative(s)
welfare mothers welfare reliant	parents who receive financial assistance/TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) benefits
high-school dropout achievement gap	people who did not complete high school people with less than a high school education opportunity gap
the homeless	people experiencing homelessness people who are homeless or without homes
the projects the ghetto the inner city	low-income housing or low-income areas of the city
Low-class	people of lower-income status

Poor (especially when used as a noun)	people whose incomes are below the federal poverty threshold
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Source: [APA Style Guide](#)

Disability

For questions concerning language around disability please consult the Disability Language Style Guide (<https://ncdj.org/style-guide/>). Some things to keep in mind:

- Refer to a disability only when it’s relevant to the story and when the diagnosis comes from a reputable source, such as a medical professional or other licensed professional.
- Editors will defer to the author’s preference regarding person-first language as this method of description is still debated in many circles, and the author may have particular insights about its applicability in the instant case.
- When possible, ask the subject how they would like to be described. If the subject is not available or unable, ask a trusted family member or relevant organization that represents people with disabilities.
- Avoid made-up words like “diversability” and “handicapable” unless using them in direct quotes or to refer to a movement or organization.

Immigration and Citizenship Status

Center the humanity of the individual or community, and prioritize accurate legal language that describes the specifics of an individual’s circumstances, instead of generalizing. All preferred alternatives are examples, with appropriateness depending on context.

Additionally, avoid the term “expat.”

- *Note:* While it might have technical accuracy, it has a historical association with White and socioeconomic privilege (such as White Africans being called “expats” and Black Africans being called immigrants).

The term “illegal” should be used to describe actions, not people. For example, the term illegal immigration is acceptable, but not “illegal immigrant.” See below for preferred alternatives.

- *Note:* BGLJ recognizes concerns about using the descriptor “illegal” even for actions in the immigration context. However, we believe the discomfort is a result of limits within the American immigration system and that as it stands, there are no sufficient alternatives.

Offensive	Suggested Alternative(s)
alien	noncitizen immigrant migrant foreign national worker resident
anchor baby	citizen child of undocumented immigrants
illegal immigrant illegals	undocumented immigrant/person/worker immigrant without papers immigrant without current status immigrant seeking status

Sources: [Race Forward](#), [Immigrant Defense Project](#), [The Guardian](#) and [The Atlantic](#)

Queer/LGBTQIA+ Identifiers

Avoid using “homosexual” outside of quotations. Authors are free to choose how they want to identify a group (e.g. LGBTQ, LGBT, or LGBTQ+), but should explain that choice within the article. Avoid using GLBT or other acronyms that put men first.

In reference to individuals, words describing sexual orientation and gender identity should be used as adjectives, not nouns. In descriptions of transgender individuals, “trans woman/en” and “trans man/en” should be two words. When trans men/women’s transness is not relevant to the sentence, they should be referred to as just men or women.

Use “queer” when appropriate for self-identified individuals and groups, but avoid use as an umbrella term. Avoid terms like “lesbians and gay men” as an umbrella term. Avoid terms like “men/women-identified” or “identifying as a man/women,” instead just use “men/women.” Using terms like “women-identified” or phrases such as “women and trans women” imply that trans women are different to “women.” Instead use expressions such as “cis women and trans people.”

Replace binary phrases like “men and women” or “girls and boys” with more inclusive phrasings like “people” or “children.”

Refrain from emphasizing gender assigned at birth if it’s not relevant. Use “gender assigned at birth” (or “gender designated at birth”) rather than biological gender or biological sex.

- *Ex.* “Not all people assigned male at birth identify as men.”

Source: [GLAAD](#)

Racial and Ethnic Groups

Capitalize racial and ethnic descriptors, such as White, Black, Indigenous, and Native peoples. Use person-first language to discuss these groups by not calling them by nominative descriptors such as “Hispanics” or “Blacks.”

“Brown” may also be capitalized as a racial or ethnic descriptor, as capitalizing in this context indicates respect or validation. Authors should be mindful of the broad spectrum of experiences of Brown people and wary of generalizing any group, including this one.

We encourage Latine over Latino or Latina, though Latinx may also be used. As above, these terms should still be used as adjectives.

Source: [Latino, Latina, or Latinx? \(Vox\)](#)

Try to be as specific as possible about groups.

- *Ex.* Ajumawi activist Morning Star Gali focuses her work on the disproportionate impact of the criminal and juvenile justice systems on Native Americans.

Rather than

Native American woman Morning Star Gali focuses her work on the disproportionate impact of the criminal and juvenile justice systems on Native Americans.

Source: [National Association of Black Journalists](#)

Nominative and Adjectival Descriptions

When ethnic identifiers are used as a noun, no hyphen is necessary. When used as an adjective, a hyphen may be used. We acknowledge that a “hyphenated status” can be read as pejorative, but the different punctuation can serve to clarify during reading.

- *Ex.* Japanese Americans have made Little Tokyo in downtown Los Angeles a gastronomic and cultural highlight of Southern California since the late 1800s.

- *Ex.* Since the late 1800s, the Japanese-American community has made Little Tokyo in downtown Los Angeles a gastronomic and cultural highlight of Southern California.

Source: [Asian American Journalists Association](#)

Religious-Related Identifiers

Consistency when describing religiously-identified groups of people is prioritized. All nouns or all adjectives should be used.

- *Ex.* Christians, Jews, and Muslims sat at the table together.

Rather than

Christians, Jewish people, and Muslims sat at the table together.

When referring to Jewish people in aggregate, it is at the author's discretion to use Jewish people or Jews. When referring to an individual, avoid using "a Jew" and instead use "Jewish."

- *Ex.* "Neil Gaiman is Jewish"

Rather than

"Neil Gaiman is a Jew."

Jew should not be used as an adjective

- *Ex.* "Jewish food" not "Jew food."

Use "antisemitism" or "antisemitic" as one word, rather than anti-semitic or anti-Semitic.

- *Ex.* "That book was antisemitic"