# INCITS

# INCLUSIVE TERMINOLOGY GUIDELINES

Version 2022.03.15

# Revision History

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| eb-2021-00288-000 | 2021-06-07 | Initial publication. |
| eb-2021-00288-001 | 2021-06-07 | Formatting edits and corrected header. |
| eb-2021-00288-002 | 2021-07-01 | Formatting edits. |
| eb-2022-00156 | 2022-03-15 | Section 1.2: Changed "harm" to "offense". |
| | | Section 2: Removed ISO 704 reference. |
| | | Section 3: Added definitions for "figurative language", "anthropomorphic language", and "gendered language". |
| | | Section 4: Removed in-place definitions of "figurative language", "anthropomorphic language", and "gendered language". |
| | | Section 4.2: Replaced "Anthropomorphizing" with "Anthropomorphic". Added an explanation of why anthropomorphic language is problematic. |
| | | Section 5: Improved phrasing of guiding questions for authors. Removed non-question from list of guiding questions. |
| | | Section 6: Rearranged content and split it into new sub-sections. |
| | | Section 6.4: Highlighted a single word that summarizes each of the strategies for mitigating terms with negative connotations. |
| | | Annex A: Introduced Acceptable Contexts and Examples of Acceptable Contexts clauses. |
| | | Annex A.1, "white": Improved phrasing of Denotative Meaning and Alternatives. Fixed typo in Negative Contexts. |
| | | Annex A.1, "black": Improved phrasing of Denotative Meaning and Alternatives. Added an Example of a Negative Context. |
| | | Annex A.1, "grandfather clause, grandfathered": Removed explanatory text from Negative Connotations. |
| | | Annex A.1, "first-class": Expanded entry from "first-class citizen" to "first-class" with an Acceptable Context. |
| | | Annex A.2, "disabled", "impaired": Added an Acceptable Context and an associated Example of Acceptable Context. Added new Alternative. |
| | | Annex A.2, "blind": Improved phrasing of Negative Contexts. Added Examples of Acceptable Contexts. |
| | | Annex A.2, "deaf", "dumb": Added Denotative Meanings. Improved phrasing of Negative Contexts. |
| | | Annex A.2, "dummy": Added Denotative Meanings and Alternatives. |
| | | Annex A.2, "dummy", "crazy", "cripple", "handicap": Improved phrasing of Negative Connotations. |
| | | Annex A.2, "cripple", "handicap": Added Alternatives. |
| | | Annex A.3, "man in the middle", "unmanned": Added Alternatives. |
| | | Annex A.4, "master": Added Denotative Meanings, Acceptable Contexts, Examples of Negative Contexts, and Examples of Acceptable Contexts. |
| | | Annex A.4, "slave": Fixed typo in Denotative Meaning. |
| | | Annex A.5, "kill", "abort", "terminate": Improve Alternatives in Examples of Negative Contexts. |
| | | Annex A.5, "hung, hang": Add "hung" to entry. Improve Denotative Meanings and Alternatives. Add Examples of Negative Contexts. |

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Scope

Terminology in INCITS documents should be clear and unambiguous, conveying only the intended meaning to all readers. This document provides guidance in writing documents that are clear and inclusive, by avoiding terms with negative connotations.

## 1.2. Purpose

Some terms have negative connotations which may be offensive to, alienate, or exclude some readers, even if no offense was intended. A term may have different meanings to different people based on their experiences and identities. Some terms are offensive and promote bias or stereotypes regarding gender, age, ability, nationality, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, etc.

Some terms have multiple meanings, and sometimes the negative connotations are not associated with all of the meanings. Such terms should be avoided unless the use is clearly linked to the less problematic meanings.

In accordance with the INCITS Code of Conduct and the INCITS Principle of Inclusive Terminology, INCITS documents are expected to be inclusive and avoid terms with negative connotations.

> *Whenever possible, inclusive terminology shall be used to describe technical capabilities and relationships. Insensitive, archaic and non-inclusive terms shall be avoided. For the purpose of this Principle, "inclusive terminology" means terminology perceived or likely to be perceived as neutral or welcoming by everyone, regardless of their sex, gender, race, color, religion, etc.*
>
> *New specifications, standards, documentation and other collateral shall be developed using inclusive terminology. As feasible, existing and legacy specifications and documentation shall be updated to identify and replace non-inclusive terms with alternatives more descriptive and tailored to the technical capability or relationship.*
>
> *INCITS Principle of Inclusive Terminology*

This document provides guidance which can be used to assist in the selection and use of appropriate terms when avoiding terms with negative connotations in new text and migrating away from terms with negative connotations in existing text. This document solely concerns inclusivity; it does not cover terminology that is problematic for reasons other than inclusivity.

## 1.3. Audience

This document is intended primarily for authors and editors of INCITS documents, but is applicable for all participants in INCITS.

## 1.4. Intent

The intent of this document is to reflect INCITS' understanding at the time of publication of the best practices for inclusive terminology and the preferences of different communities and stakeholders. This is an evolving field, and as such, this is intended to be a living document. Feedback or suggested improvements to this document are welcome, and can be sent to inclusive@standards.incits.org.

# 2. Normative References

INCITS Code of Conduct

INCITS Principle of Inclusive Terminology

ISO House Style Section on Inclusive Language

# 3. Definitions

**3.1.**
**term, n.**
word or phrase that has a denotative meaning and might also have connotative meanings

**3.2.**
**denotation, n.**
**denotative, adj.**
intended or primary meaning of a term

**3.3.**
**connotation, n.**
**connotative, adj.**
meanings, ideas, feelings, imagery, emotions, or images inferred or invoked by a term in addition to the primary meaning of a term

**3.4.**
**negative connotation, n.**
defamatory, derogatory, exclusionary, or inaccurate meanings inferred or invoked by a term

**3.5.**
**inclusive term, n.**
term that avoids individuals' subjective experience of negative connotations and is perceived or likely to be perceived as neutral or welcoming by everyone, regardless of their sex, gender, race, color, religion, etc

**3.6.**
**term with negative connotations, n.**
term that infers or invokes negative feelings, negative imagery, negative emotions, negative image, lack of belonging, or falsity

**3.7.**
**term of art, n.**
term with a precise and specialized meaning within a particular domain, field or profession

**3.8.**
**identity-first language, n.**
linguistic style that describes people in terms of their attributes or conditions

**3.9.**
**people-first language, n.**
linguistic style that avoids describing people in terms of their attributes or conditions

**3.10.**
**figurative language, n.**
language that goes beyond the literal meaning of words, such as the use of metaphors

**3.11.**
**anthropomorphic language, n.**
language that attributes human characteristics or behaviors to non-humans

**3.12.**
**gendered language, n.**
language that unnecessarily associates with a particular gender identity

# 4. Negative Connotations

If some individuals subjectively experience negative connotations with a term, then it is not inclusive and should be replaced with an inclusive term. There does not need to be consensus that a term has negative connotations; instead, there should be consensus that a term does not have negative connotations.

A term with negative connotations can be used intentionally, accidentally (without the author's awareness), or via incorrect usage (e.g. used for one intention but results in another consequence). The author's intent or belief that the use of the term with negative connotations should be acceptable, or the length of time that the term with negative connotations has been used, is not sufficient to justify its use.

## 4.1. Figurative Language

Authors should recognize that using figurative language can both be powerful (as it can quickly conjure the ideas intended) and also have pitfalls (potential association now or in the future with negative connotations).

When using figurative language, authors should take care to research any negative connotations, including international, multilingual, and multicultural contexts as their work might progress towards international adoption.

## 4.2. Anthropomorphic Language

In particular, figurative language which attributes human characteristics or behaviors to non-humans can often lead to unintentional negative connotations. Assigning human characteristics or behaviors may be an easy way to express the intended meaning, but it may unintentionally introduce connotations that are not inherent to the subject matter. Authors should avoid such language.

## 4.3. Identity-First and People-First Language

The way in which people with certain attributes or conditions are described can have negative connotations.

Different communities have different terminology preferences. Some prefer identity-first language (e.g. "the blind", "the Deaf"), while some prefer people-first language (e.g. "people with", "people who").

Authors should be conscious of and respect the preferences of different communities. Often, it is better to address needs and/or adaptations instead of talking about people (e.g. the need to understand dialogue nonverbally, or the use of captions to address that need).

## 4.4. Gendered Language

In English language documents, use of gendered language should be avoided when not necessary.

When referring to someone or something, avoid associating a particular gender if the person or thing does not have a gender, especially if the person or thing in question is non-specific or abstract (e.g. "the user" should not be assumed to have a gender unless necessary).

When referring to a specific person or entity, use the preferred pronouns of the entity. Authors should seek to learn the preferred pronouns if they are unsure.

# 5. Identifying Terms with Negative Connotations

To determine if a term has negative connotations, authors should consider:

- What are the denotative meanings of a term?
- What possible connotations could that term have?
- Are any of those connotations negative to any audience?
- In what contexts do the term(s) evoke those negative connotations?
- Is it exact usage of said term(s) that evokes those negative connotations, or are there patterns of similar terms (e.g., plurals, conjugation)?
- Are there any exceptions where use of the term is acceptable?
- Will the term(s) have negative connotations when translated into other languages?

Annex A of this document provides a non-comprehensive list of terms with negative connotations which describes the properties mentioned above for each term and suggests alternatives.

# 6. Migration from Terms with Negative Connotations

## 6.1 Replacing Terms with Negative Connotations

When a term with negative connotations appears in a published document, if it can be changed without any normative impact, it should be replaced.

## 6.2 Restructuring Text to Avoid Terms with Negative Connotations

Consider restructuring text to avoid a term with negative connotations instead of using a 1-for-1 replacement term. Not all terms with negative connotations have ideal replacement terms. Even for those terms that do have a suitable replacement, text restructuring may increase clarity and reduce the potential for causing offense.

## 6.3 Terms of Art

Sometimes, a term with a negative connotation is a term of art in widespread use outside a particular document. Simply changing the term in the document may reduce clarity and not reduce usage of the term.

When such a term is replaced, the historical term of art can be retained if necessary, with an explanation that the term has been deprecated and a reference to the new term. In these cases, it can help to identify the document with the primary definition of a term, and change the term there, and coordinate a consistent change across the field.

## 6.4 Mitigating Terms with Negative Connotations

If changing a term with negative connotations would have a normative impact (e.g. a keyword or identifier in a programming language, a term used in a normative standard), or the term is a term of art, it may not be possible to avoid the term with negative connotations immediately. Instead, authors should:

- **Identify** existing usage of the term with negative connotations throughout the portfolio or product line.
- **Minimize** uses of the term with negative connotations.
- **Alias** the term with negative connotations and rewrite the document to use the alias instead of the term with negative connotations.
- **Consult** with suppliers, stakeholders of interoperating products and standards to coordinate timely revisions.
- **Focus** on public-facing documents and higher priority products in revisions.

# Annex A. Examples of Terms with Negative Connotations

This annex identifies a non-comprehensive list of commonly encountered terms with negative connotations at the time of the authoring of this document. It is not comprehensive and is likely to evolve with time.

Unless otherwise noted, the terms here are considered problematic in all parts of speech even when not exhaustively enumerated (e.g. as a noun, verb, adjective).

The terms listed here are only considered problematic in the specific negative contexts described in their entry. Usage of the terms outside of those negative contexts is acceptable.

**CONTENT WARNING: The following list contains material that may be harmful or traumatizing to some audiences.**

## A.1. Race

**white**

*Denotative Meaning*:
1. The lightest color; the color of snow or milk.
2. People with paler complexions.

*Negative Connotations*: Racial discrimination.

*Negative Contexts*: Use to denote either:
1. Goodness, virtue, or morality.
2. Acceptance, permission, or authorization.
including use independent of the term "black".

*Alternatives*: good, allowed, permitted, authorized.

| *Examples of Negative Contexts* | *Alternatives* |
|---|---|
| **whitelist**<br>A set of good or allowed people or things. | allow list, access list, permit list<br>*Rewriting the text instead of directly replacing the term "whitelist" may make the text clearer (e.g. "the following entities are on the whitelist" can be replaced with "the following are allowed").* |
| **white hat**<br>A computer security practitioner who defends computer systems. | defender, pen tester |
| **white team**<br>A group of computer security practitioners who defend computer systems. | defending team, pen testers |

**black**

*Denotative Meaning*:
1. The darkest color; the color of coal or the night's sky.
2. An ethnic group and culture of African ancestry (must be capitalized).

*Negative Connotations*: Racial discrimination.

*Negative Contexts*: Use to denote either:
1. Badness, evil, or immorality.
2. Rejection, lack of permission, or lack of authorization.
including use independent of the term ["white"](.).

*Alternatives*: bad, disallowed, rejected, unauthorized.

| *Examples of Negative Contexts* | *Alternatives* |
|---|---|
| **blacklist**<br>A set of bad or forbidden people or things. | block list, deny list, drop list<br>*Rewriting the text instead of directly replacing the term "blacklist" may make the text clearer (e.g. "the following entities are on the blacklist" can be replaced with "the following are blocked").* |
| **black hat**<br>A computer security practitioner who violates computer systems, possibly without authorization. | attacker, adversary, threat actor |
| **black team**<br>A group of computer security practitioners who violate computer systems, possibly without authorization. | attacking team, adversarial team |
| **a black person** | a Black person (note capitalization) |

**dark pattern**

*Denotative Meaning*: A user interface that has been designed to trick users.

*Negative Connotations*: Racial discrimination.

*Negative Contexts*: Any use.

*Alternatives*: deceptive pattern.

**grandfather clause, grandfathered**

*Denotative Meaning*: An exception that allows an old rule to be applied to existing cases after a new rule has been introduced.

*Negative Connotations*: Racial discrimination, ageist, unneccessarily gendered.

*Negative Contexts*: Any use.

*Alternatives*: legacy, historical.

**first-class**

*Denotative Meaning*: The highest level or tier in a system.

*Negative Connotations*: Racial, political, and gender discrimination.

*Negative Contexts*: Use to describe people or anthropomorphized things.

*Acceptable Contexts*: Use to describe levels of service.

*Alternatives*: core, top level.

| *Examples of Negative Contexts* | *Alternatives* |
|---|---|
| **first-class citizen**<br>Someone or something that has the highest level of access and rights within a system. | core entity, top level entity |

| *Examples of Acceptable Contexts* |
|---|
| **first-class ticket**<br>The highest level of service offered on a plane, train, etc. |
| **first-class mail**<br>The fastest mail service. |

**Chinese wall**

*Denotative Meaning*: An information barrier designed to prevent exchange of information or communication that could lead to conflicts of interest.

*Negative Connotations*: Racial discrimination.

*Negative Contexts*: Any use.

*Alternatives*: ethical wall.

## A.2. Accessibility

**disabled**

*Denotative Meaning*: A condition that limits the capabilities of someone or something.

*Negative Connotations*: Perceptions that certain attributes and conditions are negatives.

*Negative Contexts*: Use that suggests certain attributes and conditions are negative.

*Acceptable Contexts*: Use to refer to a non-living thing that is not operable.

*Alternatives:*
1. *Identify and use the terms preferred by the specific community. Identify whether the specific community prefers identity-first or people-first language*.
2. *Prefer describing the need (e.g. something that cannot be seen), the adaptation (e.g. audio description), or the situation, preferably precisely (e.g. unable to discriminate color, with reduced vision, unable to hear)*.

| *Examples of Negative Contexts* | *Alternatives* |
|---|---|
| **the mentally disabled** | people with developmental disorders, people who are neurodivergent, the neurodivergent |
| **the visually disabled** | the blind, people with low vision |
| **people with visual disabilities** | the blind, people with low vision |
| **the hearing disabled** | the Deaf, the Hard-of-Hearing |
| **people with hearing disabilities** | the Deaf, the Hard-of-Hearing |

| *Examples of Acceptable Contexts* |
|---|
| the button is disabled |

**impaired**

*Denotative Meaning*: A condition that limits the capabilities of someone or something.

*Negative Connotations*: Perceptions that certain attributes and conditions are negatives.

*Negative Contexts*: Use that suggests certain attributes and conditions are negative.

*Acceptable Contexts*: Use to refer to a non-living thing that is limited or damaged.

*Alternatives:*
1. *Identify and use the terms preferred by the specific community. Identify whether the specific community prefers identity-first or people-first language*.
2. *Prefer describing the need (e.g. something that cannot be seen), the adaptation (e.g. audio description), or the situation, preferably precisely (e.g. unable to discriminate color, with reduced vision, unable to hear)*.

| Examples of Negative Contexts | Alternatives |
|---|---|
| **the mentally impaired** | people with developmental disorders, people who are neurodivergent, the neurodivergent |
| **the visually impaired** | the blind, people with low vision |
| **people with visual impairments** | the blind, people with low vision |
| **the hearing impaired** | the Deaf, the Hard-of-Hearing |
| **people with hearing impairments** | the Deaf, the Hard-of-Hearing |

| Examples of Acceptable Contexts |
|---|
| network service was impaired |

**blind**

*Denotative Meaning*: Unable to see.

*Negative Connotations*: Negative perceptions of the blind.

*Negative Contexts:*
1. Use that suggests that being blind is a negative.
2. Use of people-first language to describe the blind.
3. Use to indicate that a person lacks perception or awareness.

*Alternatives*:
1. *Use identity-first language, not people-first language*.
2. *Prefer describing the need (e.g. something that cannot be seen), the adaptation (e.g. audio description), or the situation, preferably precisely (e.g. unable to discriminate color, with reduced vision)*.
3. *To denote lack of perception or awareness*: unaware, covered, shuttered.

| Examples of Negative Contexts | Alternatives |
|---|---|
| **people who are blind** | the blind |
| **people with blindness** | the blind |

| Examples of Acceptable Contexts |
|---|
| blind review |
| double blind |

**deaf**

*Denotative Meaning:*
1. Unable to hear (must be capitalized).
2. Unwilling to listen.

*Negative Connotations*: Negative perceptions of the Deaf.

*Negative Contexts*:
1. Use that suggests that being Deaf is a negative.
2. Use of people-first language to describe the Deaf.
3. Use to indicate a lack of perception or awareness (denotative meaning 2).
4. Use to indicate that a person is stubborn (denotative meaning 3).

*Alternatives*:
1. *Use identity-first language, not people-first language*.
2. *Prefer describing the need (e.g. something that cannot be heard), the adaptation (e.g. text captions), or the situation, preferably precisely (e.g. unable to hear)*.
3. *To denote lack of perception or awareness*: unaware, covered, shuttered.
4. *To denote stubbornness*: stubborn.

| *Examples of Negative Contexts* | *Alternatives* |
|---|---|
| **people who are deaf** | the Deaf (note capitalization) |
| **people with deafness** | the Deaf (note capitalization) |
| **the deaf** | the Deaf (note capitalization) |
| **deaf person** | Deaf person (note capitalization) |

**dumb**

*Denotative Meaning*:
1. Unable to speak due to injury, disease, or disability.
2. Lack of intelligence.

*Negative Connotations*: Negative perceptions of people unable to speak

*Negative Contexts*:
1. Use to define people by their attributes or condition.
2. Use to indicate a lack of intelligence (denotative meaning 2).

*Alternatives*:
1. *To describe people or things with the condition*: mute.
2. *To denote a lack of intelligence*: unintelligent.

**dummy**

*Denotative Meaning:*
1. A placeholder or mock.
2. An unintelligent person or thing.

*Negative Connotations*: Negative perceptions of neurodivergent people and people unable to speak.

*Negative Contexts*: Any use.

*Alternatives*: placeholder, mock-up, sample, pseudo-, scaffolding.

**sanity**

*Denotative Meaning*: The soundness or health of a person's mind.

*Negative Connotations*: Negative perceptions of neurodivergent people.

*Negative Contexts*: Analogous use with non-living or abstract things.

*Alternatives*: coherence, confidence.

| *Examples of Negative Contexts* | *Alternatives* |
|---|---|
| **sanity check/test**<br>A basic test that determines if a system is functioning. | smoke check/test, basic check/test, coherence check/test, confidence check/test |

**crazy**

*Denotative Meaning*: A lack of sanity.

*Negative Connotations*: Negative perceptions of neurodivergent people.

*Negative Contexts*: Analogous use with non-living or abstract things.

*Alternatives*: unexpected, surprising, puzzling.

**cripple**

*Denotative Meaning*: A limitation or disadvantage.

*Negative Connotations*: Negative perceptions of neurodivergent people, violence.

*Negative Contexts*: Any use.

*Alternatives*:
1. limit, disadvantage.
2. *Prefer describing the need (e.g. something that cannot be accessed), the adaptation (e.g. a ramp), or the situation, preferably precisely (e.g. unable to walk).*

**handicap**

*Denotative Meaning*:
1. A limitation or disadvantage that someone or something has.
2. Modifications made to a system aiming to make the system more fair to people or things that have some disadvantage.

*Negative Connotations*: Negative perceptions of neurodivergent people.

*Negative Contexts*: Any use.

*Alternatives*:
1. limit, disadvantage.
2. *Prefer describing the need (e.g. something that cannot be accessed), the adaptation (e.g. a ramp), or the situation, preferably precisely (e.g. unable to walk)*.

| Examples of Negative Contexts | Alternatives |
|---|---|
| **the handicapped** | people with disabilities |

# A.3. Gender and Sexuality

**he/him/his, she/her/hers**

*Denotative Meaning*: Personal gender

*Negative Connotations*: Unnecessarily gendered.

*Negative Contexts*: Use in English language documents to refer to a person or thing that does not have a specific gender.

*Alternatives*:
1. *When referring to a specific person, use the pronouns that they prefer*.
2. *When referring to a non-specific or abstract person*: they/them/their. *Often the need for a pronoun can be avoided by using a noun or noun phrase (e.g. the user, the operator, the manufacturer)*.
3. *When referring to a non-living thing without a specific gender*: it/its.

**man, woman**

*Denotative Meaning*: A person.

*Negative Connotations*: Unnecessarily gendered.

*Negative Contexts*: Use in English language documents to refer to a person or thing that does not have a specific gender, including use in compound nouns or phrases.

*Alternatives*: person, human.

| Examples of Negative Contexts | Alternatives |
|---|---|
| **common man**<br>A typical person with no distinguishing or extraordinary attributes | average person, ordinary person |
| **chairman**<br>Someone who presides over a meeting or organization. | chair, chairperson, moderator |
| **draftsman**<br>Someone who makes detailed technical plans or drawings. | draftsperson |
| **workmanship**<br>The skill or art of a worker. | skill, craft, artistry, handiwork, work, technique |
| **man in the middle**<br>Illicit interception or modification of communications between two parties by an attacker. | person in the middle, attacker in the middle, machine in the middle, eavesdropper |
| **mans, man a project**<br>To acquire or provide the personnel for a project. | staffs, staff a project, hire personnel, employ staff |
| **manpower**<br>A quantity of people or human effort. | staff, labor, workforce, personnel, workers, human resource |
| **man hours/weeks/years**<br>Units which measure human effort. | people hours/weeks/years,<br>work hours/weeks/years,<br>engineer hours/weeks/years |
| **manmade**<br>Made or caused by humans. | artificial, synthetic, manufactured, industrial, made by humans |
| **men and women**<br>A group of people. | people, humanity, human beings, the public, society |
| **unmanned**<br>Something that does not involve a human. | autonomous, remotely controlled, unstaffed, unpiloted, uninhabited, uncrewed |

**male**

*Denotative Meaning*: A gender or sex.

*Negative Connotations*: Sexual intercourse and unnecessarily gendered.

*Negative Contexts*:
1. Use in English language documents to refer to a person or thing that does not have a specific gender.
2. Use to describe a non-living thing which is inserted into a counterpart (e.g. a connector or fastener).

*Alternatives*:
1. *For unnecessary gendering: Remove the adjective or use a different noun or noun phrase (e.g. the user, the operator, the manufacturer)*.
2. *To refer to non-living things inserted into counterparts*: convex, plug, pin, prong.

**female**

*Denotative Meaning*: A gender or sex.

*Negative Connotations*: Sexual intercourse and unnecessarily gendered.

*Negative Contexts*:
1. Use in English language documents to refer to a person or thing that does not have a specific gender.
2. Use to describe a non-living thing that can have a counterpart inserted into it (e.g. a connector or fastener).

*Alternatives*:
1. *For unnecessary gendering: Remove the adjective or use a different noun or noun phrase (e.g. the user, the operator, the manufacturer)*.
2. *To refer to non-living things inserted that can have counterparts inserted*: concave, receptacle, socket, slot.

**mate**

*Denotative Meaning*:
1. A friend, partner, or spouse.
2. To have sexual intercourse.
3. To join or connect together.

*Negative Connotations*: Sexual intercourse.

*Negative Contexts*: Use as a verb to describe the joining of non-living things (denotative meaning 3).

*Alternatives*: join, connect, pair.

**mother tongue**

*Denotative Meaning*:
1. The first language which someone learned.
2. Great proficiency in a language.

*Negative Connotations*: Negative perceptions of multilingual people, unnecessarily gendered.

*Negative Contexts*: Any use.

*Alternatives*:
1. *To refer to the first language learned*: first language.
2. *To express great proficiency: Rephrase in terms of proficiency*.

## A.4. Dominance

**master**

*Denotative Meaning*:
1. Someone or something that controls or manages other people or things.
2. The authoritative or primary person or thing.
3. Proficiency in a skill.

*Negative Connotations*: Human slavery, racial discrimination, and unnecessarily gendered.

*Negative Contexts*: Use to denote authority or control over other people or things (denotative meanings 1 and 2), including use independent of "slave".

*Acceptable Contexts*: Use to denote individual skill or academic degrees.

*Alternatives*: main, primary, leader, active, writer, coordinator.

| *Examples of Negative Contexts* | *Alternatives* |
|---|---|
| **master key**<br>A cryptographic key used to protect other keys. | main key, primary key |
| **master clock, grandmaster clock**<br>A precise clock that synchronizes other clocks. | main clock, coordinating clock |
| **master branch**<br>The primary or upstream branch of a version controlled repository. | main branch |

| *Examples of Acceptable Contexts* |
|---|
| master's degree |
| chess grandmaster |
| mastery of English |

**slave**

*Denotative Meaning*: Someone or something that is controlled by someone or something else.

*Negative Connotations*: Human slavery and racial discrimination.

*Negative Contexts*: Any use.

*Alternatives*: follower, secondary, standby, replica, reader, worker, helper.

**master/slave**

*Denotative Meaning*: A relationship in which someone or something (the "slave") is controlled by someone or something else (the "master").

*Negative Connotations*: Human slavery, racial discrimination, and unnecessarily gendered.

*Negative Contexts*: Any use.

*Alternatives*: main/secondary, leader/follower, primary/secondary, primary/replica, active/standby, writer/reader, coordinator/worker.

**colony**

*Denotative Meaning*:
1. Someone or something under full or partial control of someone or something else.
2. A subgroup or collection of people or things.

*Negative Connotations*: Imperialism, racial and political discrimination.

*Negative Contexts*: Any use.

*Alternatives*: settlement, population, community, territory.

## A.5. Violence and Bereavement

**suicide**

*Denotative Meaning*: To take one's own life.

*Negative Connotations*: Violence and self harm.

*Negative Contexts*: Analogous use with non-living or abstract things.

*Alternatives*: shut down, self destruct.

**murder**

*Denotative Meaning*: To end someone's life intentionally.

*Negative Connotations*: Violence.

*Negative Contexts*: Analogous use with non-living or abstract things.

*Alternatives*: halt, end, stop, eliminate, quit, close *(possibly with an enforcing or descriptive adverb, e.g. end involuntarily, hard stop, force quit)*.

**kill**

*Denotative Meaning*: To end someone's life.

*Negative Connotations*: Violence.

*Negative Contexts*: Analogous use with non-living or abstract things.

*Alternatives*: halt, end, stop, eliminate, quit, cease, close *(possibly with an enforcing or descriptive adverb, e.g. end involuntarily, hard stop, force quit)*.

| *Examples of Negative Contexts* | *Alternatives* |
|---|---|
| **kill a child process** | halt a subprocess, stop a subprocess |

**abort**

*Denotative Meaning*: To end someone or something.

*Negative Connotations*: Bereavement, end of a pregnancy.

*Negative Contexts*: Analogous use with non-living or abstract things.

*Alternatives*: halt, end, stop, eliminate, quit, cease, close *(possibly with an enforcing or descriptive adverb, e.g. end involuntarily, hard stop, force quit)*.

| *Examples of Negative Contexts* | *Alternatives* |
|---|---|
| **abort a child process** | halt a subprocess, stop a subprocess |

**terminate**

*Denotative Meaning*: To end someone or something.

*Negative Connotations*: Bereavement, end of a pregnancy.

*Negative Contexts*: Analogous use with non-living or abstract things.

*Alternatives*: halt, end, stop, eliminate, quit, cease, close *(possibly with an enforcing or descriptive adverb, e.g. end involuntarily, hard stop, force quit)*.

| *Examples of Negative Contexts* | *Alternatives* |
|---|---|
| **terminate a child process** | halt a subprocess, stop a subprocess |

**hung, hang**

*Denotative Meaning*:
1. Unresponsive, not progressing (with an implication of indefinitely).
2. To end someone's life.

*Negative Connotations*: Violence.

*Negative Contexts*: Analogous use to describe something or someone that is non-responsive.

*Alternatives*: frozen, unresponsive, blocked.

| *Examples of Negative Contexts* | *Alternatives* |
|---|---|
| **hanging process** | frozen process, unresponsive process |
| **the process will hang on the semaphore** | the process will block on the semaphore |