

Teacher Resource: Language Note

Racing to Change Curriculum

What's in a Name?

Oregon Black Pioneers recognizes that our race is part of our identity, but it does not define who we are. To that end, we strive to use language which centers our personhood ahead of our race.

The terms “Black Americans” and “African Americans” can be used interchangeably. When using the word “Black,” please treat the word (in both singular and plural form) as an *adjective*, not a *noun*.

Say This	Not This
“He was a wealthy Black man.”	“He was a wealthy Black.”
“She is Black”	“She is a Black.”
“The school had several Black students.”	“The school had several Blacks.”
“Black Oregonians in the 1800s faced unique challenges.”	“Blacks in Oregon in the 1800s faced unique challenges.”

One exception is “Black American(s)”, in reference to the collective identity of all Americans of African descent. This term should be treated as a *proper noun* just as you would use “African Americans”, “Native Americans” or “Asian Americans”.

