

# Teacher learning series: Academic vocabulary for American Indian English learners

## Handout 4

### Bias screening tool

Category	Avoid	Look For
<b>Identity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Talks about generic “Indians” or a vague, homogeneous “Native American” identity. All Indigenous peoples from North America (Canada, United States, Mexico) are implied to have the same language, culture, history, spiritual traditions, or way of life.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Individual and unique tribal nations and communities are not identified or are incorrectly located.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A hodgepodge of cultural attributes or characteristics is ascribed to one character or tribe.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Nations and communities are correctly located and identified.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Nations and cultures are presented as unique with accurate cultural attributes and characteristics.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The cultural, physical, and linguistic diversity among various American Indian nations and tribal communities is acknowledged.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> One or more of local or regional American Indian nations and communities are specifically mentioned.</li> </ul>
<b>Culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Promotes bias, myths, stereotypes, or caricatures through “loaded language,” definitions, and terminology.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Portrays Indigenous people, cultures, or nations as primitive, savage, or simple.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Contains shallow and stereotypical images (for example, Indian princess, mystical shaman, stoic Indian, cartoonish caricatures).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> American Indian language and dialogue are presented in “broken” English or pidgin.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Implies that American Indian people, cultures, or nations are inferior or bad, through loaded words, biased language, or imagery. For example, portrayals of American Indians as “savage,” “wild,” “primitive,” or childlike and helpless.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Makes negative comparisons to European or Western cultures, norms, or values.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Promotes respectful, authentic, and accurate information about American Indian people, communities, and cultures through appropriate language, definitions, and terminology.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Uses images to convey the unique, sophisticated, nuanced, and complex nature of tribal cultures and identities.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Accurately represents the uniqueness and diversity of tribal languages and ways of speaking.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Uses nonjudgmental and respectful language and imagery that recognizes and honors the intrinsic value of Indigenous people, communities, and cultures, as well as the importance of continued cultural and linguistic survival.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Recognizes Indigenous cultures, norms, and values as inherent and integral to tribal nations and communities.</li> </ul>

Category	Avoid	Look For
<b>History and Sovereignty</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Denies or undermines tribal sovereignty by implying that the United States “gave” rights or land to American Indian nations and tribal communities and that they are dependent on U.S. generosity or are wards of the United States needing to be “saved.”</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Uses the word “discovery” to talk about European contact.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Contains blatant or overt inaccuracies about American Indian people, histories, nations, languages, or cultures.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ignores controversial or complex issues.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Focuses on the “inevitable” victory or conquest of tribal nations and members and communities.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Glosses over harm inflicted by U.S. policies or military actions.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Suggests or implies extinction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Includes truthful and accurate accounts of American Indian perspectives and experiences in a respectful manner.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Recognizes the sovereignty of tribal nations and their unique government-to-government relationship with the U.S. federal government.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Addresses controversial or complex issues by giving equal voice to all sides, including tribal members, nations, and communities.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Contains representations of religious, political, and economic diversity among present-day American Indians.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Depicts tribal nations, people, cultures, and languages as surviving and overcoming efforts to assimilate.</li> </ul>
<b>Voices and Perspectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Presents history, events, or issues only from a non-Native perspective.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Highlights only tribal members who served the purposes of “pioneers,” European Americans, and/or white settlers.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Makes only brief or passing mentions of tribal members or focuses on one tribal member as a representative of “ALL tribal perspectives.”</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Omits or minimizes American Indian tribal histories, people, and experiences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Showcases diverse perspectives of tribal citizens, including various voices within tribal nations and communities.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledges the nonviolent ways in which tribal members, communities, and nations have resisted colonization, including passive resistance, legal and legislative efforts, organizing, and protesting.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Recognizes contemporary and historic tribal members who actively resisted efforts to remove, assimilate, and eradicate tribal people and nations in the United States.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Portrays American Indian people as unique individuals and complex human beings living in dynamic communities.</li> </ul>