

GLOSSARY

WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO UNDERSTAND

SKIN TONE

Skin tone is the color of our skin determined by melanin, our ancestors' geographic origins, and the sun.

HUE

Hue is both a color and a shade of color.

MELANIN

Melanin is a brown pigment that forms the hues of our skin, hair, and the irises of your eyes. Because everyone has this brown pigment, everyone's skin is a hue of brown. The two common types of melanin are

1. Eumelanin, which is responsible for brown and black hues, and
2. Pheomelanin, which is responsible for the color of red hair

Those of us with darker skin tones have melanin (for added protection against sun damage). Those of us with lighter skin tones have less melanin (to absorb more sun rays for vitamin D activation). Our freckles are small, concentrated areas of increased melanin. In the sun, our skin's melanin, which is responsible for tanning, multiplies to form a protective shield by absorbing ultraviolet radiation.

ANCESTORS

Ancestors are relatives who lived long ago.

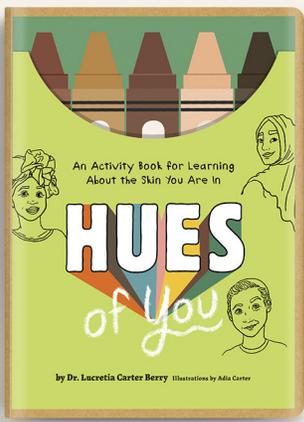
GEOGRAPHIC ORIGIN

Geographic origin is the region where your ancestors lived. Ancestors with darker skin may have lived in sunny, hot regions, closer to the equator. As such, they needed more melanin to protect against too much sun. Ancestors with lighter skin may have lived in colder regions, further from the equator. They needed less melanin to absorb more of the sun's rays.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Native peoples who predate Western or European colonization. In other words, they are the native people who lived on lands taken over by settler colonial movements.

Example: Lumbee are indigenous to North Carolina. Inuit are indigenous to Canada. Lumbee and Inuit lived in their regions for thousands of years before Europeans settled there and established political control.



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RACE

Race categorizes people based on the presumption of shared physical and biological characteristics. As White Europeans colonized and enslaved groups, they created racial categories and a racial hierarchy that became a crucial means to sustain their dominant relations of power and privilege. Institutionalized, this racial hierarchy forced us to “fit” into racial categories on the assumption that we reflect a particular ancestral heritage, and legitimated gaps in equality of wealth, opportunity, and access to other valuable resources.

Although racial distinctions lack biological validity, these distinctions become “real” through their ongoing social enactment—personally, organizationally, and societally, in every arena of our social world, including day to day microaggressions, pervasive stigmas, exclusionary policies, and established laws.

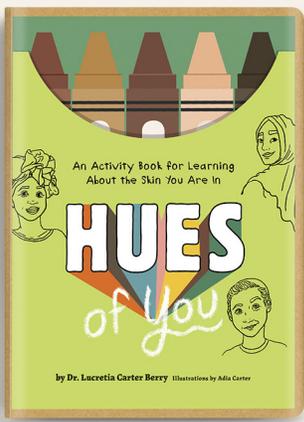
Essentially, race is not biologically real—it is socially and politically constructed via law, public policy and social practices.

Example: A person who could be categorized as Black in the United States might be considered White in Brazil or colored in South Africa. Black, White, and colored are racial categories enacted by the policies, practice, and beliefs of those particular countries.

ETHNICITY

Ethnicity is a socially defined category of people who identify with each other based on common ancestral, social, cultural or national experience.

Example: Italian, Jewish, Yoruba, Parsis



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CULTURE

Culture is a group of people's way of life—the behaviors, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept, generally without thinking about them, and that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next.

Example: "I grew up in a small, mid-western, farm town where hunting is a right of passage."

NATIONALITY

Nationality is the fact or status of being a member or citizen of a particular country or nation.

Example: American (United States), South African, Nigerian, Pakistani

COLORISM

A global phenomenon evident in countries as a consequence of colonialism denoting prejudice or discrimination against dark skin tones, typically among people of the same ethnic group or racial category.

Example: "light skinned girls are smarter than dark skinned girls"

COLOR BLINDNESS

Race-based color blindness is the idea that you do not "see" color or notice differences in race. Or that if you do, you do not treat people differently or oppress people based on those differences. "I don't see color" is a term used to sound non-racist. This ideology and approach suppresses public discourse on race and masks discrepancies in decision-making.

RACISM

Racism is an oppressive force that creates and reproduces a complex system of social inequality. It involves one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the major institutions of society—government, courts of law, banks, schools. It is a byproduct of racial categorization that focuses on the hierarchical arrangement of racial groups.

OTHERING

Occurs when an individual or group attributes difference as negative in order to set themselves apart as an in-group of belonging from an out-group of not belonging and legitimizes the marginalization, exclusion, and sometimes even violent extinction of out-groups.

Definitions are informed by

- Gerardo Marti, Professor of Sociology at Davidson College
- Racial Equity Institute's Racial Equity Workshop
- California Newsreel's *Race—The Power of An Illusion*