# Examples of Racial Microaggressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Microaggression</th>
<th>Message</th>
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| Alien in own land            | **“Where are you from?”**  
**“Where were you born?”**  
**“You speak good English.”**  
A person asking an Asian American to teach them words in their native language. | You are not American  
You are a foreigner                                                                             |
| Ascription of Intelligence   | **“You are a credit to your race.”**  
**“You are so articulate.”**  
Asking an Asian person to help with a Math or Science problem. | People of color are generally not as intelligent as Whites.  
It is unusual for someone of your race to be intelligent.  
All Asians are intelligent and good in Math / Sciences. |
| Color Blindness              | **“When I look at you, I don’t see color.”**  
**“America is a melting pot.”**  
**“There is only one race, the human race.”** | Denying a person of color’s racial / ethnic experiences.  
Assimilate / acculturate to the dominant culture.  
Denying the individual as a racial / cultural being. |
| Criminality – assumption of criminal status | A White man or woman clutching their purse or checking their wallet as a Black or Latino approaches or passes.  
A store owner following a customer of color around the store.  
A White person waits to ride the next elevator when a person of color is on it. | You are a criminal.  
You are going to steal / You are poor / You do not belong / You are dangerous. |
| Denial of individual racism  | **“I’m not a racist. I have several Black friends.”**  
**“As a woman, I know what you go through as a racial minority.”** | I am immune to races because I have friends of color.  
Your racial oppression is no different than my gender oppression. I can’t be a racist. I’m like you. |
| Myth of meritocracy          | **“I believe the most qualified person should get the job.”**  
**“Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough.”** | People of color are given extra unfair benefits because of their race.  
People of color are lazy and / or incompetent and need to work harder. |
| Pathologizing cultural values / communication styles | Asking a Black person: “Why do you have to be so loud / animated? Just calm down.”  
To an Asian or Latino person: Why are you so quiet? We want to know what you think. Be more verbal.”  
Speak up more.”  
Dismissing an individual who brings up race / culture in work / school setting. | Assimilate to dominant culture.  
Leave your cultural baggage outside. |
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<td><strong>Second-class citizen</strong>&lt;br&gt;Occurs when a White person is given preferential treatment as a consumer over a person of color</td>
<td>Person of color mistaken for a service worker&lt;br&gt;Having a taxi cab pass a person of color and pick up a White passenger&lt;br&gt;Being ignored at a store counter as attention is given to the White customer behind you&lt;br&gt;“You people …”</td>
<td>People of color are servants to Whites. They couldn’t possibly occupy high-status positions. You are likely to cause trouble and/or travel to a dangerous neighborhood. Whites are more valued customers than people of color You don’t belong. You are a lesser being.</td>
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<td><strong>Environmental microaggressions</strong>&lt;br&gt;Macro-level microaggressions, which are more apparent on systemic and environmental levels</td>
<td>A college or university with buildings that are all names after White heterosexual upper class males&lt;br&gt;Television shows and movies that feature predominantly White people, without representation of people of color&lt;br&gt;Overcrowding of public schools in communities of color&lt;br&gt;Overabundance of liquor stores in communities of color</td>
<td>You don’t belong / You won’t succeed here. There is only so far you can go. You are an outsider / You don’t exist. People of color don’t / shouldn’t value education. People of color are deviant.</td>
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<td><strong>How to offend without really trying</strong></td>
<td>“Indian giver.”&lt;br&gt;“That’s so gay.”&lt;br&gt;“She welshed on the bet.”&lt;br&gt;“I jewed him down.”&lt;br&gt;“That’s so White of you.”&lt;br&gt;“You people …”&lt;br&gt;“We got gypped.”&lt;br&gt;Imitating accents or dialects&lt;br&gt;Others?</td>
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**Adapted from:**