

Statement on the N-Word²

We, the racism-critical working group of the Department of African Studies, advocate that the N-word should not be used. It is not necessary in any context - not even in a historically argued context - to pronounce or write it out.

The N-word, used consciously or unconsciously, has the effect of marking Black people or people who are identified as Black as supposedly different, degrading their dignity in order to secure white supremacy. Today, the term is almost always associated with violation and devaluation by those who are labelled as such and brought into a context with traumas of the slave trade, colonialism and everyday devaluation. The use of the N-word invokes demeaning characteristics that have a normative and stereotyping effect.

A conscious and reflective use of language - which does not only include deleting offensive terms from the vocabulary - contributes to an environment in which everyone feels comfortable and safe.

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² A detailed explanation/ contextualisation of the N-word can be found, for example, in Arndt, Susan/ Ofuatey-Alazard, Nadja (ed., 2011): *Wie Rassismus aus Wörtern spricht. (K)Erben des Kolonialismus im Wissensarchiv deutsche Sprache. Ein kritisches Nachschlagewerk.* Münster: Unrast Verlag. 653-657. OR Kilomba, Grada (2009, 3. June). *Das N-Wort.* bpb. Retrieved 28. Januar 2022, in <https://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/afrikanische-diaspora/59448/das-n-wort>