

Privilege for Sale Activity and Reflection

Compiled from University of North Carolina and Boise State

See: University of North Carolina: [efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://intercultural.uncg.edu/wp-content/uploads/Privilege-for-Sale-Activity-and-Reflection.pdf](https://intercultural.uncg.edu/wp-content/uploads/Privilege-for-Sale-Activity-and-Reflection.pdf)

Boise State: <https://sites.google.com/a/u.boisestate.edu/social-justice-training/about-us/our-training/privilege-checklist>

This activity creates space and opportunity for participants to:

- acknowledge and investigate privilege.
- empathetically connect and reflect on the experience of having (or not having) privilege.
- consider how no one privilege is more important than another, that for someone any privilege may feel essential.
- identify privileges that they take for granted in their everyday life.
- investigate and consider what groups may have limited access to what privileges and effect that lack of access may have on an individual.

When we say privilege, we are talking about social privilege(s), or a special, unearned advantage or entitlement, used to one's own benefit or to the detriment of others. These groups can be advantaged based on social class, age, education level, disability, ethnic or racial category, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and religion.

Having privilege doesn't make you a bad person. In fact, we all have privilege in the sense that we are able to access higher education. What is most important is to understand and unpack your privilege, allowing you to be more understanding and open-minded about the experiences of those different from yourself.

First, you will be given a specific amount of (imaginary) money based on the first letter of your last name, which you can find below.

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| ● A: \$200 | ● O: \$700 |
| ● B: \$400 | ● P: \$1,500 |
| ● C: \$700 | ● Q: \$300 |
| ● D: \$1,500 | ● R: \$600 |
| ● E: \$300 | ● S: \$900 |
| ● F: \$600 | ● T: \$1,100 |
| ● G: \$900 | ● U: 1,900 |
| ● H: \$1,100 | ● V: \$500 |
| ● I: 1,900 | ● W: \$800 |
| ● J: \$500 | ● X: \$1,000 |
| ● K: \$800 | ● Y: \$200 |
| ● L: \$1,000 | ● Z: \$600 |
| ● M: \$200 | |
| ● N: \$400 | |

Now that you know how much money you have, look at the following list of privileges. Each privilege costs \$100 to purchase. Decide which privileges you will be buying with the money you're allotted.

Privilege Checklist

Class Privilege

- I have usually had access to healthcare.
 - I can afford to visit a healthcare professional multiple times per year.
 - I have access to transportation that will get me where I need to go.
 - New products are designed and marketed with my social class in mind.
 - I have knowledge of and access to community resources.
 - I can swear or commit a crime without people attributing it to the low morals of my class.
 - I can update my wardrobe with new clothes to match current styles and trends.
 - People do not assume that I am unintelligent or lazy based on the dialect I grew up speaking.
 - Regardless of the season, I can count on my home remaining a comfortable temperature.
 - I know that I will be able to go to the grocery store when I need to and will be able to buy healthy foods that I want.
 - Whenever I've moved out of my home it has been voluntary, and I had another home to move into.
 - I can plan on getting a raise at my job.
 - My decision to go or not to go to college wasn't based entirely on financial determinants.
 - I have a safe and reliable place where I can study.
-

White Race, Ethnicity, and Culture Privilege

- I can expect that I'll receive days off from work for holidays that matter to me.
 - People know how to pronounce my name; I am never mocked or perceived as a threat because of my name.
 - I know that the police and other state authorities are there to protect me.
 - People of my race widely represented in media, positively as well as negatively.
 - When I am told about our national heritage or about 'civilization', I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
 - I can expect to see many students and professors of my race on campus.
 - I do not often have to think about my race or ethnicity--in fact, I don't really notice it.
 - I do not have to worry about incarceration unless I commit a very serious crime.
 - People do not assume that I am unintelligent or lazy based on my race.
 - There have never been attempts to scientifically or socially eliminate people of my race or ethnicity.
 - Other people attribute my successes to my personal merit.
 - My race or ethnicity will not make people around me uncomfortable.
 - I do not have to worry about being chosen last for a job or housing due to my race or ethnicity.
 - I can move into a new neighborhood, start a new job, or enter a new school or class and know that the people around me will generally respect and feel safe around me.
 - I can go to a store or spend money knowing that no one will be suspicious of me.
 - I am seen as an individual; I am never held personally responsible for the actions of other people of my race or ethnicity.
-

Citizenship Privilege

- If I apply for a job, I do not have to worry about what to write under "Social Security Number."
- I know that I will be paid at least minimum wage at a job and that labor laws will protect me.
- If I am mistreated or a crime is committed against me, I have some hope of being able to access legal recourse.
- Most of the time I am able to surround myself with people who share a common or collective history, who speak the same language that I do, and who understand my culture.
- I am not worried on a daily basis about being "discovered" and deported along with, or away from my family; I don't have to worry that a small misstep could lead to my deportation, even if I currently have legal papers to be in the U.S.

- I can go into any bank and set up a checking account without fear of discrimination, thus knowing my money is safer than on my person or elsewhere.
- If a police officer pulls me over, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my perceived immigration status.
- I can be reasonably sure that if I need legal or medical advice, my citizenship status will not be a consideration.
- I can vote in any election on policies or for people who will make laws affecting my way of life and my community.
- I may consider running for political office to serve my community.
- I, or a member of my family, can apply for scholarship aid to the institutions of higher education that are supported by my family's tax dollars.
- No one ever tells me to speak a particular language or to get out of 'their' country.
- I do not have to worry that my citizenship status will make people around me uncomfortable.

Cisgender Privilege

- I can use public facilities like restrooms and locker rooms without fear of verbal abuse, assault, or arrest.
 - People know what to call me and how to refer to me without asking.
 - I do not have to worry that my gender expression will make people around me uncomfortable.
 - Strangers don't ask me what my genitals look like and how I have sex.
 - My validity as a man/woman/human is not based on how much surgery I've had or how well I "pass" as a particular gender.
 - I have the ability to walk through the world and generally blend-in, not being constantly stared or gawked at, whispered about, pointed at, or laughed at because of my gender expression.
 - Acquaintances use the name I provide, and don't insist on calling me by my "real name" [birth name].
 - I can reasonably assume that my ability to work, rent an apartment, or secure a loan will not be denied on the basis of my gender identity/expression.
 - I can flirt, engage in courtship, or form a relationship and not fear that my biological status may be cause for rejection or attack, nor will it cause my partner to question their sexual orientation.
 - If I end up in the emergency room, I do not have to worry that my gender will keep me from receiving appropriate treatment, or that all of my medical issues will be seen as a result of my gender.
 - My identity is not considered a mental pathology ("gender identity disorder" in the DSM IV) by the psychological and medical establishment.
 - I will not be placed in a sex-segregated detention center, holding facility, jail or prison that is incongruent with my identity.
 - I am not required to undergo an extensive psychological evaluation in order to receive basic medical care.
 - When I do receive health care, professionals know how to provide me with needed treatments and respect.
 - If a crime is committed against me, my gender expression will not be used as a justification ("gay panic") nor as a reason not to punish the perpetrators.
 - I can easily find role models and mentors to emulate who share my identity.
 - Hollywood depicts people of my gender in films and television, and representations are more nuanced than having my identity be either the focus of a dramatic storyline or the punchline for a joke.
 - I can assume that everyone I encounter will understand my identity, and not think I'm confused or hell-bound when I reveal it to them.
 - I am able to purchase clothes, shoes, and other products that I like without being refused service/mockered by staff, questioned about my genitals, or having to order special or custom made sizes.
 - Official documents like my certificate and driver's license show the name I go by and the gender I identify as.
 - No stranger checking my identification or driver's license will ever question me because I do not fit gender expression they have assigned to me.
 - I can reasonably assume that I will not be denied services at a hospital, bank, or other institution because the staff does not believe the gender marker on my ID card to match my gender identity or because they simply do not like me.
 - My gender is an option on legal forms.
 - No one will disagree with my stated gender or accuse me of lying.
 - I do not fear interactions with police or security officers due to my gender identity.
 - I am able to go to new places knowing there will be bathrooms there I can use and people there who will respect me.
 - I don't have to convince my family, friends, and coworkers of my true gender, earn their love and respect all over again, or constantly remind them to use proper gender pronouns and my name.
 - I know that I can date someone and that they aren't just looking to satisfy a curiosity or kink pertaining to my gender identity.
-

Sexuality Privilege

- I will have immediate access to my loved one in case of accident or emergency.
- I will receive public recognition and support for an intimate relationship (e.g., congratulations for an engagement).
- I may express affection in most social situations and not expect hostile or violent reactions from others.
- I can openly live with my partner.
- When a relationship ends from death or separation, I will receive support from others.
- When my partner dies, I will receive paid leave to grieve.
- Neighbors, colleagues, and good friends will find me socially acceptable.
- Learning about romance and relationships from fiction movies and television.
- I have access to role models of my sexual orientation and accurate media images of people with whom I can identify.
- I can assume I am around others of my sexuality most of the time, and I do not have to worry about being the only one of my sexuality in a class, on a job, or in a social situation.
- I will not be fired from my job for my sexuality.
- I can talk openly about my relationship, vacations, and family planning.
- I can easily find a neighborhood in which residents will accept my household.
- If I raise, adopt, or teach children, no one will assume that I will molest them or somehow force them into my sexuality.
- If I work in a field not traditionally dominated by members of my gender, it will not be presumed a reflection of my sexuality.
- Strangers don't ask me how I have sex.
- When I do receive health care, professionals know how to provide me with needed treatments and respect.
- I can love, act, speak, and dress as I choose without being treated as a representative of my sexuality or being prosecuted for breaking the law.
- I have access to basic civil rights that will not be denied or outlawed because some people disapprove of my sexuality.
- I will not be mistreated by the police or victimized by the criminal justice system because of my sexuality.
- I have never had to conceal or reveal my sexuality to the people around me.

Male/Masculine Privilege

- I can expect to receive promotions as frequently and be paid the same amount as my equally qualified colleagues.
- I can express frustration, passion, assertiveness, etc. without being called a 'bitch', someone attributing my ideas to 'my time of the month', or being similarly dismissed.
- I can mess something up without it being seen as an indictment of my entire gender.
- People don't attribute my successes and positions simply to my gender; my personal merits are never called into question.
- I can enter public spaces without being sexually harassed.
- At work, I don't often have to worry about harassment from customers, coworkers, or bosses.
- I feel comfortable going somewhere alone or going on a date with someone new; I don't have to fear violence.
- I know that people will believe me when I report a crime against me.
- I don't have to worry about people perceiving me as sexual because of my clothes or body.
- People do not often make unsolicited comments about my body.
- I am not expected to spend a great deal of time and money on my appearance, and I am not shamed when I choose not to spend my time and money on my appearance.
- The decision to hire me will not be based on assumptions about whether or not I might choose to have a family.
- People do not call my personal and family life into question in context of my career.
- I do not often have to fear sexual violence.
- People of my gender who I can identify with appear frequently in media and popular culture.
- When I speak up, my opinions are heard and respected equally with others'.

Ability Privilege

- I can go to new places knowing that I will be able to move through the space.
- When I feel unwell or unable to do something, people do not often say that I'm faking it or tell me to just suck it up.
- Language and slang are not predicated on the assumption that I am bad because of my conditions and abilities (i.e. 'retarded', 'lame', 'stupid', 'crazy', 'psycho', 'crippled', 'blind' meaning ignorant, etc.)

- I will not be rejected when applying for health insurance due to physical or cognitive disability or mental illness.
- People do not suspect that I got a job or got into a certain school due to my disability status.
- I do not have to worry about making the people around me uncomfortable because of my disability.
- People do not treat me like a child by crouching down to me, using a 'baby voice', or offering unsolicited help for trivial tasks.
- I can excel in challenging situations without other people being surprised by my success.
- My success is not presented as a guilt trip for others who do not have my disability ("If she can do it despite her disability, what's your excuse?")
- People believe that my ailments actually exist, even if they can't see them.
- I see people with my physical and cognitive disabilities and/or mental illnesses in media and popular culture presented accurately and positively.
- I can assume that people will be willing and able to communicate with me; they will understand my body language and social cues, etc.
- If I have a medical problem, I don't have to worry that doctors will dismiss it as part of a pre-existing ability-related condition.
- There are not scientific efforts to eradicate people with my DNA.
- People do not pity me or call my quality of life into question.
- I do not expect isolation rooms, restraints, and psychotropic drugs forced upon me during my educational and medical experiences.
- People who have power over my education will not decide that I need to be removed from classes with my peers and/or taught an entirely different set of non-academic 'skills'.
- I can go to any class, job, or website and assume that the materials presented to me will be understandable.
- If I need an accommodation (such as an interpreter, extra time for a text, or an extension), I will receive it.
- People don't think I'm lazy or stupid when I need to try something again.
- I am able to enter new situations without fear of debilitating anxiety, embarrassment, harassment, or violence.
- No one assumes that any partner attracted to me must be a predator or pedophile, even though I am an adult.
- I am never told that I should not have children lest I pass on the genes that cause my neurological type.
- People do not assume that living in the same household as me is inherently "tragic" or "devastating," or that my family, friends and partner will need a support group to deal with living with me.
- If I am unhappy, people do not assume my unhappiness is a character trait; my emotions are acknowledged and respected rather than dismissed.

Linguistic Privilege

- People do not make assumptions about my intelligence based on my language ability.
- I can go anywhere and assume that I will be able to understand the things around me and communicate with the people around me.
- People do not talk to me like a child or otherwise treat me like a child; they do not speak too loudly and slowly to me.
- I do not have to worry about making people uncomfortable because of my native language, accent, or skill level in their native language.
- People will usually be willing to repeat and restate things for me.
- I do not have to worry that I will be chosen last for housing and jobs because of my language use.
- If I speak multiple languages, people view it as a unique talent rather than a detriment.
- Customers, coworkers, bosses, professors, and peers are not likely to give me negative performance reviews or assessments due to my language use.
- People do not mock my accent, dialect, and/or language.
- People do not fetishize my accent, dialect, and/or language.
- People do not ask to learn bad words in my language or share the few words they do know in my language.
- I speak my native language because it is part of my family's heritage, not because it was forced onto my ancestors by others.
- People do not view me as an invader or threat due to my native language or dialect.
- People might not correct me when I make a minor 'mistake' in grammar or pronunciation.
- People don't assume they can understand my entire culture based on my native language or dialect.
- I can readily find people and media around me that can communicate with me in my native language or dialect.

Questions for Reflection

1. How did this activity make you feel?
2. What was your process when selecting privileges?
3. What were some things on this list that surprised you? Why?
4. Why do you think this activity specifically assigns money? For example, we could have easily said each privilege is worth 1 token and everyone has 5 tokens. What does money represent?
5. Why do you think the amount of money you were given was randomly assigned?
6. What would you put down for Crime Victim Privileges?