

DROP THE I-WORD

VIDEO DISCUSSION GUIDE

Use these questions to spark conversation
after you watch the video at droptheiword.com

1. What are some ways that the common use of the term “illegals” (the i-word) effects undocumented immigrants? Documented immigrants? People of color? White people?
2. When a person, rather than an action, is referred to as “illegal,” what are the implications?
3. What are some ways the mainstream media’s use of the i-word shapes public opinion about immigrants and immigration issues?
4. What are some ways that popular usage of the i-word affects immigration policies and law enforcement practices?
5. Do you agree that the i-word is a racially charged and pejorative term? Why or why not?
6. How does the i-word compare to other terms considered to be racially charged that have been used in contemporary or historic discourse to describe other communities?
7. What ways do immigrant restrictionists/anti-immigrant proponents benefit by using the i-word (and getting others to use it)?
8. Why do you think much of the mainstream media has so readily adopted the use of the i-word?
9. Do you think it meets the journalistic standards of accuracy and fairness?
10. What role can media consumers play in shaping media discourse, such as the media’s use of the i-word? What actions could people take to change the discourse and do you think they would make a difference?
11. What alternative terms could you suggest that accurately, fairly and respectfully describe undocumented immigrants?

Additional Readings:

[Drop the I-Word Toolkit, May 2011. http://colorlines.com/iword_micro/resources/en/toolkit.html](http://colorlines.com/iword_micro/resources/en/toolkit.html)

[Rinku Sen and Fekkak Mamdouh. The Accidental American. 2008. http://www.accidentalamerican.us/](http://www.accidentalamerican.us/)

[Joseph Nevins. Operation Gatekeeper: The rise of the “Illegal Alien” and the making of the U.S.- Mexico Boundary. http://amzn.to/b9pEce](http://amzn.to/b9pEce)

[Lawrence Downes. “What Part of Illegal Don’t You Understand?” New York Times, October 28, 2007. http://nyti.ms/dx7bfH](http://nyti.ms/dx7bfH)

[Jeffrey Feldman. “To Reframe Immigration Corn is Key.” HuffPost.com June 15, 2007. http://huff.to/k7JImC](http://huff.to/k7JImC)

[Kung Li. “We Need to Dump the Word ‘Illegal.’” Truthoutblog.com May 24, 2010. http://bit.ly/cwldOA](http://bit.ly/cwldOA)