# Check your privilege!

In 1989, Dr. Peggy McIntosh, a US-American researcher, developed a checklist based on her experiences of privilege as a White woman in the United States. Her essay “[White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack](https://psychology.umbc.edu/files/2016/10/White-Privilege_McIntosh-1989.pdf)" has become a powerful exercise on how power and privilege work as one moves around in daily life. Her statements focus on race-based privilege for White folks irrespective of their commitment to racial equality. McIntosh’s work shows that being a person of color (POC) or BIPOC or non-White in a predominantly White society leaves one with daily encounters rooted in discrimination and hardship.

Additionally, [*Critical Race Theory*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critical_race_theory) and especially the concept of [Intersectionality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intersectionality) as developed by Prof. Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw have increased our understanding of different forms of privilege beyond race.

Motivated by these works, the following checklist has been prepared to show other forms of privilege. It has been expanded to incorporate the intersectional nature of unequal experiences and the resulting discrimination. These are a few examples of how power and privilege are distributed based on our social identities and geographical location.

These statements were created at a German university and are based on experiences in Germany.

**Instructions for the activity**: Please read each statement and indicate whether you agree or disagree with it. If you are unsure/unfamiliar with the situation, just think how you might react if this happened to you. There are no right or wrong responses. The more you agree with these statements, the higher the privilege you experience.

1. I do not have to worry about accessibility when choosing a restaurant.
2. I can walk into any public place without worrying about uncomfortable stares due to my clothes.
3. I can use public toilets without worrying about my safety.
4. When I find myself struggling with school or work assignments, I am not judged as ‘a lazy person’ for that.
5. When attending new lectures every semester, I do not have to disclose my health history to my lecturer.
6. I am always addressed with the pronouns I identify with.
7. I can walk through busy streets without hearing any hate speech against me based on how I look.
8. I can donate blood while maintaining an active sex life.
9. There is always an official holiday during major festive events of my faith.
10. When I go to check a rented property, no one is interested in my religion.
11. I can afford to buy healthy food for my family and/or me without worrying about finances.
12. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my ethnic group.
13. I can be sure that there will be no study/work deadlines on my New Year’s Day or the day I celebrate an important religious or cultural festival.
14. I do not have to worry about building accessibility when choosing a subject to study.
15. People don’t make assumptions about my intelligence and social status based on the way I speak or based on my accent.
16. Occasionally I can attend official evening get-togethers or weekend events without worrying about my care responsibilities.
17. I usually have enough money to pay my monthly bills.
18. When classes went online during the Corona pandemic, I already had a laptop to help me study/work from home.
19. As an adolescent I was able to openly talk about my crushes and relationships - this was perceived as “normal” behavior.
20. Studying at a university was part of my career goals as I saw members of my family doing the same.
21. I can look forward to going to field visits/excursions without worrying about additional expenses, or accessibility or encountering hate speech due to the way I look.
22. Official information from government agencies is available in more than one language. Hence, it is easy for me to stay informed about laws, regulations and current affairs.
23. When I have to take care of bureaucratic and/or administrative tasks at work or in private, I can always find someone who will (willingly and happily) explain the process for me in a way that I can understand.
24. When I need information about basic daily necessities, such as insurance, internet and phone providers, electricity and water providers, health care providers, I can be sure to find that information in at least one international language.