

What Privilege Looks Like in Everyday Life

- Whites are less likely than Blacks to be arrested; once arrested, they are less likely to be convicted and, once convicted, less likely to go to prison, regardless of the crime or circumstances. Whites, for example, constitute 90 percent of those who use illegal drugs, but less than half of those in prison on drug-use charges are White.
- Although many superstar professional athletes are Black, in general Black players are held to higher standards than Whites. It is easier for a “good but not great” White player to make a professional team than for a similar Black.
- Whites are more likely than comparable Blacks to have loan applications approved, and less likely to be given poor information or the run around during the application process.
- Whites are charged lower prices for new and used cars than people of color are, and because of residential segregation Whites have access to higher-quality goods of all kinds at cheaper prices.
- Whites can choose whether to be conscious of their racial identity or to ignore it and regard themselves as simply human beings.
- Whites are more likely to control conversations and be allowed to get away with it, and to have their ideas and contributions taken seriously, including those that were suggested previously by a person of color and dismissed.
- Whites can usually assume that national heroes, success models and other figures held up for general admiration will be of their race.
- Whites can generally assume that when they go out in public, they won’t be challenged and asked to explain what they’re doing, nor will they be attacked by hate groups simply because of their race.
- Whites can assume that when they go shopping, they’ll be treated as serious customers, not as potential shoplifters or people without money to make a purchase. When they try to cash a check or use a credit card, they can assume they won’t be hassled for additional identification and will be given the benefit of the doubt.
- White representation in government and the ruling circles of corporations, universities, and other organizations is disproportionately high.
- Most Whites are not segregated into communities that isolate them from the best job opportunities, schools and community services.
- Whites have greater access to quality education and healthcare.

- Whites are more likely to be given early opportunities to show what they can do at work, to be identified as potential candidates for promotion, to be mentored, to be given a second chance when they fail, and to be allowed to treat failure as a learning experience rather than as an indication of who they are and the shortcomings of their race.
- Whites can assume that race won't be used to predict whether they will fit in at work or whether teammates will feel comfortable working with them.
- Whites can succeed without other people being surprised.
- Whites don't have to deal with an endless and exhausting stream of attention to their race. They can simply take race for granted as unremarkable to the extent of experiencing themselves as not even having a race. Unlike some of my African-American students, for example, I don't have people coming up to me and treating me as if I were some exotic "other" gushing about how "cool" or different I am, wanting to know where I'm "from," and reaching out to touch my hair.
- Whites don't find themselves slotted into occupations identified with their race like Blacks are slotted into support positions or Asians into engineering, for example.
- Whites aren't confused with other Whites, as if all Whites look alike. They're noticed for their individuality, and they take offense whenever they're characterized as members of a category (such as "White") rather than being perceived and treated as individuals.
- Whites can reasonably expect that if they work hard and "play by the rules," they'll get what they deserve and they feel justified in complaining if they don't. It is something other racial groups cannot realistically expect.

(Johnson, 2001, pp. 27-30)