

Spic vs. Gringo

Dictionary Definitions – What We Are Taught – & The Real World Dichotomy

Taught:

"Spic" (or spick, spik) is a **highly offensive**, derogatory ethnic slur used in the United States to target Hispanic and Latino Americans or people of Latin American descent. It is used to marginalize people based on national origin, often associated with a stereotype of not speaking English, and is not a neutral slang term.

Origins and Usage

- **Origin:** The term originated around 1910–1915, likely from an altered pronunciation of "(No) speak the (English)" ("spick-a-the...") used by American laborers in Panama during canal construction.
- **"Spiggoty":** It evolved from earlier terms like "spig" or "spiggoty," recorded by 1907.
- **Other Myths:** Claims that it stands for "Spanish Person In Custody" are inaccurate folk etymology.
- **Context:** It is a targeted insult often used in harassment or discriminatory situations.

Note: The term "spic" is considered deeply offensive and constitutes hate speech.

"Gringo" is a common Latin American slang term for a foreigner, particularly a person from the United States. Its meaning can range from neutral to **affectionate** to insulting, depending on context. It is often used to describe someone who does not speak Spanish or is perceived as out of touch with Latin culture.

Key Aspects of "Gringo" Usage

- **Definition:** Refers primarily to people from the United States, but can also apply to Europeans or other non-Hispanic individuals.
- **Context:** Not inherently derogatory; often used casually or descriptively, though it can be used as an insult in certain situations.
- **Cultural Context:** May describe someone seen as out of place or unfamiliar with local customs.
- **Etymology:** Likely derived from the Spanish word *griego* ("Greek"), historically used to describe something foreign or unintelligible.
- **Regional Differences:** In Brazil, "gringo" refers broadly to any foreigner."

The Reality

These terms are used in ways that racially target people (dehumanize) based on identity.

Both are racist terms, one is not less offensive than the other.

In truth, that Gringo is so normalized and widely used within Latin American culture makes it that much more offensive. It is a sign of socially immaturity, normalized dehumanization, discrimination and racism.

The General Idea: “Gringo” is a common word in Latin America, which is not supposed to be offensive, but don’t say “spic:” That is racist.

What is truly happening? Racism is normalized and acceptable when used against Whites, but not other races.

Summary: It is racism, and one is not less offensive than the other. They are equally offensive. Don’t say either. That is the compromise.