

ABOUT THE ADL CALENDAR OF OBSERVANCES

The increasingly pluralistic population of the United States creates diverse communities, student bodies and employees. To enhance mutual understanding and respect among the various religious, ethnic and cultural groups, the Anti-Defamation League offers this Calendar of Observances as a tool to increase awareness and sensitivity about religious obligations as well as ethnic and cultural festivities that may affect students, colleagues and neighbors.

The calendar includes significant multi-faith religious observances of the major faiths represented in the United States. Thus, it can be used as a resource when planning school exam timetables and school activities, or when scheduling workplace festivities and community events. In addition, the calendar notes U.S. holidays that are either legal holidays or observed in various states and communities throughout the country. A third component is the inclusion of important national and international observances that may be commemorated in the U.S.

The dates of secular holidays are based on the Gregorian calendar, which is commonly used for civil dating purposes. Many religions and cultures follow various traditional calendar systems that are often based on the phases of the moon with occasional adjustments for the solar cycle. Therefore, specific Gregorian calendar dates for these observances will differ from year to year. In addition, calculation of specific dates may vary by geographical location and according to different sects within a given religion.

Jewish and Islamic holidays begin at sundown the previous day and end at sundown on the date listed.

JANUARY 2009

January 1	Thursday	NEW YEAR'S DAY The first day of the year in the Gregorian calendar, commonly used for civil dating purposes.
January 1	Thursday	TEMPLE DAY • Buddhist Many Buddhists of all traditions pay their respects and pray for good fortune for the new year at the temple.
January 6	Tuesday	EPIPHANY • Christian Known as <i>Theophany</i> in Eastern Christianity, it celebrates the manifestation of Jesus as Christ. In addition, the Western Church associates Epiphany with the journey of the Magi to the infant Jesus, and the Eastern Church with the baptism of Jesus by John.
January 6	Tuesday	CHRISTMAS • Armenian Orthodox Christian Armenian Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus on Epiphany, except for Armenians living in Israel, who celebrate Christmas on January 19th.
January 7	Wednesday	CHRISTMAS • Eastern Christian Most Orthodox churches celebrate Christmas 13 days later than other Christian churches based on their use of the Julian rather than the Gregorian version of the Western calendar.
January 7	Wednesday	ASHURA • Islamic A day of fasting observed on the 10th day of the month of Muharram to celebrate Moses' exodus from Egypt. For Shi'a Muslims, it also marks the climax of the ten-day Remembrance of Muharram, which started on December 29, 2008. On Ashura, Shi'ites mourn the martyrdom of Hussein, the son of Ali and grandson of Muhammad. at the Battle of Kerbala in 680 CE.
January 11	Sunday	MAHAYANA NEW YEAR • Buddhist In Mahayana countries, the New Year starts on the first full moon day in January.
January 14	Wednesday	MAKAR SANKRANTI • Hindu Seasonal celebration recognizing the increasing length of days.
January 19	Monday	DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.'S BIRTHDAY The birthday of civil rights activist Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is celebrated on the third Monday in January.
January 19-23	Monday-Friday	NO NAME-CALLING WEEK Annual week of educational activities aimed at ending name-calling and bullying of all kinds.
January 26	Monday	LUNAR NEW YEAR On this day Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese New Year are celebrated.
January 27	Tuesday	UN HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY Annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust coinciding with the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp in 1945.

FEBRUARY 2009

February	Full Month	BLACK HISTORY MONTH Celebrates Black History and African-American culture in the United States.
February 1	Sunday	NATIONAL FREEDOM DAY Commemorates the signing of the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery in 1865.
February 8	Sunday	RACE RELATIONS SUNDAY Created in 1922 by the National Council of Churches in recognition of the importance of interracial relations and learning.
February 9	Monday	TU B'SHVAT • Jewish New Year's Day for Trees, and traditionally the first of the year for tithing fruit of trees. Now a day for environmental awareness and action, such as tree planting.
February 14	Saturday	VALENTINE'S DAY Celebrates the idea of romantic love.
February 15	Sunday	SUSAN B. ANTHONY DAY Birthday of Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906), a pioneer in the Women's Rights Movement.
February 15	Sunday	NIRVANA DAY • Buddhist Celebrates the day when the historical Buddha achieved Parinirvana, or complete Nirvana, upon the death of his physical body. Sometimes celebrated on February 8.
February 15-21	Sunday-Saturday	BROTHERHOOD/SISTERHOOD WEEK Designated by the National Conference of Community and Justice to emphasize the importance of brotherhood and sisterhood.
February 16	Monday	PRESIDENTS' DAY Honors all past presidents of the United States of America.
February 23	Monday	MAHA SHIVARATRI • Hindu Also called <i>Shiva Ratri</i> , it is the Great Festival of Shiva.
February 24	Tuesday	SHROVE TUESDAY • Western Christian A day of penitence as well as the last chance to feast before Lent begins. Also known as <i>Mardi Gras</i> .
February 25	Wednesday	ASH WEDNESDAY • Western Christian The first day of Lent for Western Christian churches, a 40-day period of spiritual preparation for Easter, not counting Sundays.

MARCH 2009

March	Full Month	NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH Honors women as significant agents of historical change.
March 2	Monday	CLEAN MONDAY • Eastern Christian The beginning of <i>Great Lent</i> for Eastern Christian churches, which starts 40 days before Orthodox Easter (<i>Pascha</i>), counting Sundays.
March 8	Sunday	INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY Celebration of the economic, political and social achievements of women worldwide.
March 9	Monday	MILAD AL-NABI • Islamic Celebrates the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, founder of Islam. Shi'a Muslims celebrate it five days later than Sunni Muslims.
March 10	Tuesday	PURIM • Jewish The "Feast of Lots" marks the salvation of the Jews of ancient Persia from extermination.
March 11	Wednesday	MAGHA PUJA • Buddhist Also known as <i>Sangha Day</i> , it commemorates the spontaneous assembly of 1,250 arahants, completely enlightened monks, in the historical Buddha's presence.
March 11	Wednesday	HOLI • Hindu Also called <i>Holaka</i> or <i>Phagwa</i> , this festival celebrates spring and commemorates various events in Hindu mythology.
March 17	Tuesday	ST. PATRICK'S DAY • Christian Feast day of the patron saint of Ireland. In the U.S., a secular version is celebrated by people of all faiths through appreciation of all things Irish.
March 20	Friday	VERNAL EQUINOX The date when night and day are nearly the same length. It marks the first day of the season of spring.
March 21	Saturday	INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION Call to action to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination worldwide.
March 31	Tuesday	CESAR CHAVEZ DAY Honors Mexican American farm worker, labor leader and activist Cesar Chavez (1927–1993) who was a nationally respected voice for social justice.

APRIL 2009

April 3	Friday	RAMA NAVAMI • Hindu Celebrates the birthday of Rama, king of ancient India, hero of the epic Ramayana, and seventh incarnation of Vishnu.
April 5	Sunday	PALM SUNDAY • Western Christian Observed the Sunday before Easter to commemorate the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.
April 9	Thursday	THERAVADA NEW YEAR • Buddhist In Theravada countries, the New Year is celebrated on the first full moon day in April.
April 9-16	Thursday- Thursday	PASSOVER/PESACH • Jewish The eight-day "Feast of Unleavened Bread" celebrates Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage.
April 9	Thursday	HOLY THURSDAY • Western Christian Also known as <i>Maundy Thursday</i> , it is celebrated on the Thursday before Easter commemorating the Last Supper, at which Jesus and the Apostles were together for the last time before the Crucifixion.
April 10	Friday	GOOD FRIDAY • Western Christian Observed the Friday before Easter, it commemorates the Crucifixion of Jesus. Known as <i>Holy Friday</i> in Eastern Christianity.
April 12	Sunday	EASTER • Western Christian Celebrates the resurrection of Jesus. Known as <i>Pascha</i> in Eastern Christianity.
April 12	Sunday	PALM SUNDAY • Eastern Christian Observed the Sunday before Pascha to commemorate the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.
April 15	Wednesday	DAY OF SILENCE Students take a day-long vow of silence to protest the actual silencing of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students and their straight allies due to bias and harassment.
April 16	Thursday	HOLY THURSDAY • Eastern Christian Celebrated on the Thursday before Pascha commemorating the Last Supper, at which Jesus and the Apostles were together for the last time before the Crucifixion.
April 17	Friday	HOLY FRIDAY • Eastern Christian Observed the Friday before Pascha, it commemorates the Crucifixion of Jesus. Known as <i>Good Friday</i> in Western Christianity.
April 19	Sunday	PASCHA • Eastern Christian Celebrates the resurrection of Jesus. Known as <i>Easter</i> in Western Christianity.
April 21	Tuesday	YOM HASHOAH • Jewish "Holocaust Remembrance Day" memorializes the heroic martyrdom of six million Jews who perished in the Nazi Holocaust.
April 24	Friday	ARMENIAN MARTYRS' DAY Memorializes the extermination of some 1.5 million Armenians between 1915 and 1923 in Turkey.
April 29	Wednesday	YOM HAATZMA'UT • Jewish "Israel Independence Day" celebrates the establishment of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948. It is fixed as the fifth day of the Hebrew month of Iyar.

MAY 2009

May	Full Month	ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH Recognizes the contributions and celebrates the culture of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States.
May 1	Friday	INTERNATIONAL WORKER'S DAY Also known as <i>May Day</i> , it celebrates the social and economic achievements of workers worldwide. The day commemorates the Haymarket Riot of 1886 in Chicago, in which police and protesters clashed following a workers' strike for an eight-hour work day.
May 3	Sunday	WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY Serves as an occasion to inform the public of violations of the right to freedom of expression and as a reminder that many journalists brave death or jail to bring people their daily news.
May 5	Tuesday	CINCO DE MAYO In 1862 Mexican forces defeated French occupational forces in the Battle of Puebla.
May 9	Saturday	BUDDHA DAY • Buddhist Also known as <i>Vesak</i> or <i>Visakha Puja</i> , it marks the occasion of the birth, spiritual awakening and death of the historical Buddha.
May 10	Sunday	MOTHER'S DAY Children of all ages show appreciation for their mothers.
May 12	Tuesday	LAG B'OMER • Jewish Celebrates the end of a divine-sent plague and/or Roman occupation during Rabbi Akiva's lifetime (died c. 135 CE).
May 21	Thursday	WORLD DAY FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY FOR DIALOGUE AND DEVELOPMENT Recognizes cultural diversity as a source of innovation, exchange and creativity, as well as the obligation to create a more peaceful and equitable society based on mutual respect.
May 21	Thursday	ASCENSION DAY • Western Christian Celebrated 40 days after Easter, it commemorates the ascension of Jesus into Heaven.
May 25	Monday	MEMORIAL DAY Initiated originally to honor the dead of the Civil War, this observance now pays homage to the dead of all U.S. wars.
May 28	Thursday	ASCENSION DAY • Eastern Christian Celebrated 40 days after Pascha, it commemorates the ascension of Jesus into Heaven.
May 29-30	Friday-Saturday	SHAVUOT • Jewish The "Feast of Weeks" celebrates the covenant established at Sinai between God and Israel, and the revelation of the Ten Commandments.
May 31	Sunday	PENTECOST • Western Christian Also known as <i>Whitsunday</i> , the seventh Sunday after Easter commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and women followers of Jesus. Marks the birth of the Christian Church.

JUNE 2009

June	Full Month	LGBT PRIDE MONTH Commemorates the anniversary of the June 28, 1969 Stonewall riot in New York City, the incident that initiated the modern gay rights movement in the United States. <i>LGBT</i> (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) <i>Pride Day</i> is the last Sunday in June.
June 7	Sunday	PENTECOST • Eastern Christian The seventh Sunday after Pascha commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and women followers of Jesus. Marks the birth of the Christian Church.
June 12	Friday	ANNE FRANK DAY Birthday of young Jewish girl whose diary describes her family's experiences hiding from the Nazis through assistance of gentile friends.
June 12	Friday	LOVING DAY Observes the anniversary of the 1967 United States Supreme Court decision <i>Loving v. Virginia</i> which struck down the miscegenation laws remaining in 16 states barring interracial marriage.
June 14	Sunday	FLAG DAY Anniversary of the adoption of the United States flag by Congress in 1777.
June 14	Sunday	ALL SAINTS DAY • Eastern Christian In Orthodox churches observed on the first Sunday after Pentecost, it commemorates all known and unknown Christian saints.
June 19	Friday	JUNETEENTH Originally commemorating the announcement of the abolition of slavery in Texas in 1865, it is now celebrated throughout the U.S. to honor African-American freedom and achievement.
June 20	Saturday	WORLD REFUGEE DAY Raises awareness about the plight of refugees and displaced persons.
June 21	Sunday	SUMMER SOLSTICE In the northern hemisphere, the longest day of the year. It marks the first day of the season of summer.
June 21	Sunday	FATHER'S DAY Children of all ages show appreciation for their fathers.

JULY 2009

July 4	Saturday	INDEPENDENCE DAY Anniversary of the United States Declaration of Independence in 1776.
July 7	Tuesday	DHARMA DAY • Buddhist Also known as <i>Asala Puja</i> , it commemorates the historical Buddha's first discourse following his spiritual awakening.
July 26	Sunday	ADA (AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT) DAY Commemorates the 1990 signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which guarantees equal opportunity for people with disabilities.
July 30	Thursday	TISHA B'AV • Jewish Mourning of the destruction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem in 586 BCE and 70 CE.

AUGUST 2009

August 5	Wednesday	RAKSHA BANDHAN • Hindu Also called <i>Rakhi</i> , this festival celebrates the protective relationship between brothers and their sisters.
August 7	Friday	NISF SHABAAN • Islamic "Night of Repentance" in preparation for the fast of Ramadan. Fixed as the 15th day or middle (nisf) of the eighth month of Shabaan in the Islamic calendar.
August 9	Sunday	INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES Celebrates the richness of indigenous cultures and recognizes the challenges indigenous peoples face today, ranging from poverty and disease to dispossession, discrimination and denial of basic human rights.
August 12	Wednesday	INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY Celebrates young people and the integral role they play in helping to create a world fit for children.
August 14	Friday	KRISHNA JAYANTI • Hindu Celebrates Krishna's birthday, Vishnu's eighth incarnation on earth.
August 22- September 20	Saturday- Sunday	RAMADAN • Islamic A month of strict fasting from dawn until dusk in honor of the first revelations of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad.
August 23	Sunday	INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE SLAVE TRADE AND ITS ABOLITION Memorializes the tragedy of the transatlantic slave trade, coinciding with the anniversary of the uprising in Santo Domingo (today Haiti and the Dominican Republic) that initiated its abolition.
August 23	Sunday	GANESH CHATURTHI • Hindu Celebrates the birthday of Ganesha, the elephant-deity.

SEPTEMBER 2009

September 3	Wednesday	ULAMBANA • Buddhist Buddhist Ghost Festival. The unsettled spirits of dead ancestors are calmed with chanting and offerings to enable them to pass peacefully into the next world.
September 7	Monday	LABOR DAY Celebrated the first Monday in September in recognition of U.S. workers.
September 8	Tuesday	INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY Call to action for universal literacy.
September 15 -October 15	Full Month	NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH Celebrates the contributions, heritage and culture of Hispanic and Latino Americans.
September 17	Thursday	CONSTITUTION DAY AND CITIZENSHIP DAY Commemorates the ratification of the United States Constitution in 1787. Also honors all who have become U.S. citizens.
September 17	Thursday	LAILA AL-QADR • Islamic "The Night of Power" marks the night in which God first revealed the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad. Often fixed as the 27th day of the Islamic month of Ramadan, Sunnis may also observe it on the 21th, 23rd, 25th or 29th. Shi'ites observe it on the 19th, 21st or 23rd of Ramadan.
September 19	Saturday	NAVARATRI • Hindu Nine-day festival celebrating the triumph of good over evil. It worships God in the form of the universal mother commonly referred to as Durga, Devi or Shakti, and marks the start of fall.
September 19 -20	Saturday- Sunday	ROSH HASHANAH • Jewish Beginning of the Jewish New Year and first of the High Holy Days, which marks the beginning of a ten-day period of penitence and spiritual renewal.
September 21	Monday	EID AL-FITR • Islamic The "Feast of the Breaking of the Fast" marks the end of Ramadan, the holy month of fasting from dawn until dusk.
September 22	Tuesday	AUTUMNAL EQUINOX The date when night and day are nearly of the same length. It marks the first day of fall.
September 28	Monday	NATIVE AMERICAN DAY Celebrates Native American history and culture.
September 28	Monday	DASSERA • Hindu Anniversary of the day when Rama killed the evil demon Ravana. Also known as <i>Durga Puja</i> , which celebrates the goddess Durga.
September 28	Monday	YOM KIPPUR • Jewish The "Day of Atonement" marks the end of the Ten Days of Penitence that begin with Rosh HaShanah.

OCTOBER 2009

October	Full Month	LGBT HISTORY MONTH Marks and celebrates the lives and achievements of lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender people in the United States.
October	Full Month	NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH Recognizes the contributions of workers with disabilities.
October 3-9	Saturday-Friday	SUKKOT • Jewish The week-long "Feast of Booths" commemorates the 40-year wandering of the Israelites in the desert on the way to the Promised Land.
October 10	Saturday	SHEMINI ATZERET • Jewish "The Eighth (Day) of Assembly" is observed on the day immediately following Sukkot.
October 11	Sunday	SIMCHAT TORAH • Jewish "Rejoicing in the Torah" celebrates the conclusion of the public reading of the Pentateuch and its beginning anew.
October 11	Sunday	COMING OUT DAY Encourages honesty and openness about being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Commemorates October 11, 1987, when 500,000 people marched on Washington, DC, for gay and lesbian equality.
October 12	Monday	COLUMBUS DAY Marks Christopher Columbus's landing at San Salvador on October 12, 1492. Known as <i>Día de la Raza</i> , "Day of the Race", in Spanish-speaking countries and communities.
October 17	Saturday	INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY Call to action for the eradication of poverty and destitution worldwide.
October 17	Saturday	DIWALI • Hindu Also called <i>Deepavali</i> , "Festival of Lights", it celebrates the victory of good over evil, light over darkness, and knowledge over ignorance.
October 24	Saturday	UNITED NATIONS DAY Commemorates the founding of the world organization in 1945.
October 31	Saturday	REFORMATION DAY • Christian Commemorates the beginning of the Protestant Reformation in 1517.
October 31	Saturday	HALLOWEEN The eve of All Saints' Day.

NOVEMBER 2009

November	Full Month	NATIONAL AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH Celebrates and honors the history and culture of Native Americans in the United States.
November 1	Sunday	ALL SAINTS' DAY • Western Christian Commemorates all known and unknown Christian saints. Eastern Christianity observes it on the first Sunday after Pentecost.
November 2	Monday	ALL SOULS' DAY • Christian Commemoration of all faithful Christians who are now dead. In Mexican tradition it is celebrated as <i>Día de los Muertos</i> between October 31 and November 2, and is an occasion to remember dead ancestors and celebrate the continuity of life.
November 3	Tuesday	ELECTION DAY A day set by U.S. law for the election of public officials.
November 9	Monday	KRISTALLNACHT Commemorates the 1938 pogrom against Jews throughout Germany and Vienna.
November 11	Wednesday	VETERANS' DAY Honors the U. S. Armed Services and commemorates the war dead.
November 16	Monday	INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR TOLERANCE Emphasizes the dangers of intolerance and is a call to action for the advancement of human welfare, freedom and progress everywhere, as well as a day to encourage tolerance, respect, dialogue and cooperation among different cultures and peoples.
November 16-22	Monday–Sunday	AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK Celebrates public education and honors individuals who are making a difference in ensuring every child in the U. S. receives a quality education.
November 20	Friday	TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE Memorializes those who were killed due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice.
November 26	Thursday	THANKSGIVING DAY Following a 19th century tradition, it commemorates the Pilgrims' harvest feast in the autumn of 1621.
November 28	Saturday	EID AL-ADHA • Islamic The "Feast of Sacrifice" concludes the Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca), and is a three-day festival recalling Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son in obedience to God.
November 29	Sunday	ADVENT • Christian Advent is a season of spiritual preparation in observance of the birth of Jesus. In Western Christianity, it starts on the fourth Sunday before Christmas. In Eastern Christianity, the season is longer and begins in the middle of November.

DECEMBER 2009

December 1	Tuesday	WORLD AIDS DAY International day of action on HIV and AIDS.
December 3	Thursday	INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DISABLED PERSONS Raises awareness about persons with disabilities in order to improve their lives and provide them with equal opportunity.
December 8	Tuesday	BODHI DAY • Buddhist Also known as <i>Rohatsu</i> , it observes the spiritual awakening (bodhi) of founder Siddharta Gautama, the Buddha, ca. 596 BCE. Celebrated on the eighth day either of December or the 12th month of the lunar calendar.
December 10	Thursday	HUMAN RIGHTS DAY On this day in 1948 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
December 12	Saturday	OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE • Christian Celebrates the apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary (by her title, Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Patroness of Mexico and the Americas) before Juan Diego, an indigenous convert to Roman Catholicism, on the Mexican hill of Tepeyac in 1531.
December 15	Tuesday	BILL OF RIGHTS DAY Commemorates the signing into law of the ten original amendments of the United States Constitution in 1791.
December 18	Friday	MUHARRAM • Islamic The month of Muharram marks the beginning of the Islamic liturgical year. The first day of the month, al-Hijra, remembers the migration of Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina in 622 CE. It also marks the beginning of the ten-day Shi'ite Remembrance of Muharram, a period of intense grief and mourning of the martyrdom of Hussein, the son of Ali and grandson of Muhammad.
December 12-19	Saturday-Saturday	CHANUKAH • Jewish Eight-day "Festival of Lights", celebrating the rededication of the Temple to the service of God in 164 BCE. Commemorates the victory of the Maccabees over the Greek King, Antiochus, who sought to suppress freedom of worship.
December 21	Monday	WINTER SOLSTICE In the northern hemisphere, the shortest day of the year. It marks the first day of the season of winter.
December 25	Friday	CHRISTMAS • Western Christian Commemorates the birth of Jesus.
December 26-January 1, 2010	Saturday-Friday	KWANZAA A seven-day celebration honoring African-American heritage and its continued vitality. "Kwanzaa" means "first fruits (of the harvest)" in Swahili.
December 27	Sunday	ASHURA • Islamic A day of fasting observed on the 10th day of the month of Muharram to celebrate Moses' exodus from Egypt. For Shi'a Muslims, it also marks the climax of the ten-day Remembrance of Muharram, which mourns the martyrdom of Hussein at the Battle of Kerbala in 680 CE.
December 29	Tuesday	WOUNDED KNEE DAY On December 29, 1890 more than 200 Lakota Sioux were massacred by U.S. troops at Wounded Knee in South Dakota.