

Gender Pronouns Guide

What is a pronoun?

A pronoun is any word that can replace a noun or noun phrase (*I, you, them*).

What is a gender pronoun?

A gender pronoun is the pronoun that a person uses for themselves. Gender pronouns refer specifically to people that are being talked about (*he, she, him, his, her, they, them*). We have moved away from the language of “preferred pronouns” due to people generally not having a pronoun “preference” but simply having “pronouns.”

What kind of pronouns can be used?

These are not the only pronouns. There are an infinite number of pronouns as new ones emerge in our language. Some people prefer not to use pronouns and would like their names to be used instead.

Gendered Pronouns					
She	<i>She</i> laughed	I called <i>her</i>	<i>Her</i> hair	That is <i>hers</i>	<i>She</i> likes <i>herself</i>
He	<i>He</i> laughed	I called <i>him</i>	<i>His</i> hair	That is <i>his</i>	<i>He</i> likes <i>himself</i>
All Gender/Gender Neutral Pronouns					
They	<i>They</i> laughed	I called <i>them</i>	<i>Their</i> hair	That is <i>theirs</i>	<i>They</i> like <i>themselves</i>
Spivak	<i>Ey</i> laughed	I called <i>em</i>	<i>Eir</i> hair	That is <i>eirs</i>	<i>Ey</i> likes <i>emself</i>
Ze	<i>Ze</i> laughed	I called <i>ze</i>	<i>Ze's</i> hair	That is <i>zes</i>	<i>Ze</i> likes <i>zeself</i>
Ze & Hir	<i>Ze</i> laughed	I called <i>hir</i>	<i>Hir</i> hair	That is <i>hirs</i>	<i>Ze</i> likes <i>hirsself</i>
Xe	<i>Xe</i> laughed	I called <i>xem</i>	<i>Xyr</i> hair	That is <i>xvrs</i>	<i>Xe</i> likes <i>xemself</i>
Yo	<i>Yo</i> laughed	I called <i>yon</i>	<i>Yos</i> hair	That is <i>yos</i>	<i>Yo</i> likes <i>yoself</i>



Why is it important to respect pronouns?

You can't always tell someone's pronoun by looking at a person.

When someone is referred to by the wrong pronoun, it can make the person feel disrespected, invalidated, and alienated.

Inquiring about pronouns is a simple way to show that you want to cultivate an environment that respects all gender identities.

How should I ask what someone's pronoun is?

You can simply ask **"What pronouns do you use?"** to an individual in private.

This may feel uncomfortable at first, but you do not want to say the wrong pronouns based on assumptions.

If you make a mistake: That's okay! If you use the wrong pronoun, apologize, correct it, and then move on. Avoid continually talking about how bad you feel for making the mistake, for it makes the person feel like they need to console you. If you forget someone's pronoun, follow the same protocol: **apologize, correct it, and move on.**

If others are using the wrong pronoun for a person, try to correct it by saying something like "Actually, Alex prefers the pronoun *she*."

If others continue to use the wrong pronoun, do not ignore it. It might help to ask the individual who has been misidentified if they would like you to take the person aside and remind them of the proper pronoun.

Never refer to a person as "it" or "he-she," unless the individual requests that you do so.