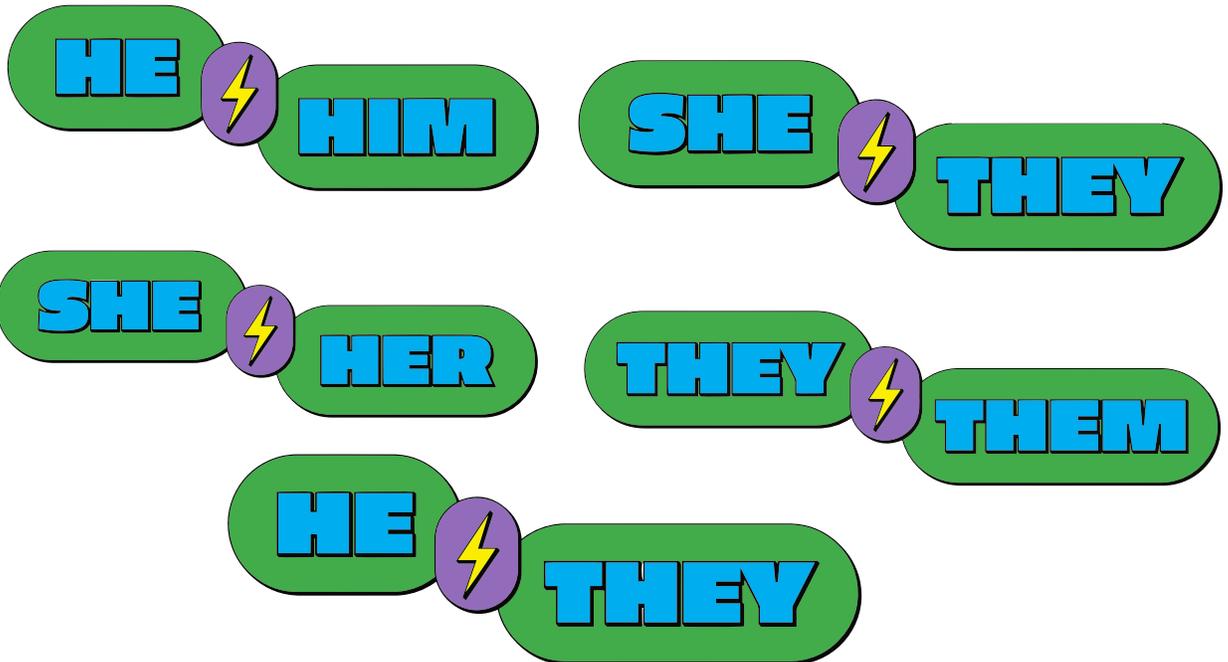
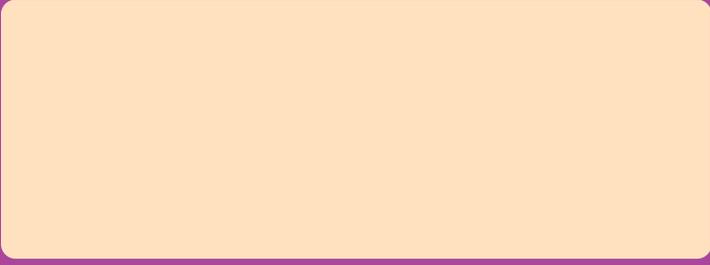


# PRONOUNS

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MY PRONOUNS ARE



# PRONOUNS

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Personal Pronouns are pronouns we use to refer to a person, and these come in sets. Generally we are taught that there are two personal pronoun sets to refer to people. He/Him/His is used if they are a boy, and She/Her/Hers if they are a girl, but these are not the only pronouns available to people, just as these are not the only genders.

Just as sex does not automatically equate to gender, the pronouns someone uses do not determine their gender. Some people only use one set of pronouns, some people use multiple sets, and some people use all pronouns.



# Introductions

## TIPS TO REMEMBER



When meeting someone new, the best way to bring up the subject of pronouns is to introduce yourself with the pronouns you use first, and then ask if they would like to share theirs.

It is better to ask someone directly and politely what their pronouns are, rather than assuming.



If you accidentally refer to someone with the incorrect pronouns, it is best to correct yourself and quickly apologize before moving on. Drawing attention to the mistake, or making an extended apology, is often uncomfortable for the person you are referring to.



If someone declines to share their pronouns, ask if they would prefer you use the ambiguous single pronoun or no pronouns.

# **WHEN PRONOUNS CHANGE**

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If someone you know changes their correct and or preferred pronouns, check with them to make sure you are clear on how to best refer to them.

Some people may choose to use one set of pronouns around friends, and another around classmates or family. There are many reasons someone may choose to change their pronouns in different social settings, but these reasonings are generally private, so knowing what pronoun sets to use is more important than knowing why you are using different sets. If someone does share why they are using different sets, keep in mind that it is personal to their identity.

# PERSONAL PRONOUNS

## He/Him/His

He/Him/His pronouns are most often used to describe masculine people. Many men and man aligned people use this pronoun set.

**Example:** He is speaking. I listened to **him**. That backpack is **his**. **He** uses these pronouns for **himself**.

## She/Her/Hers

She/Her/Hers pronouns are most often used to describe feminine people. Many women and women aligned people use this pronoun set.

**Example:** She is speaking. I listened to **her**. That backpack is **hers**. **She** uses these pronouns for **herself**.

## They/Them/Theirs

They/Them/Theirs pronouns are often used to refer to a group of people, but this set of pronouns is also referred to as the ambiguous single pronoun. This means that it is proper grammar to refer to someone with They/Them/Theirs pronouns if their gender is not known. Some people may choose to identify with this pronoun and use it.

# USING THEY/THEM

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**Example:**

**They** are speaking.

I listened to **them**.

That backpack is **theirs**.

**They** use these pronouns for **themselves**.

# NEOPRONOUNS

Neopronouns are personal pronouns that have been created recently, which means many people can feel out of place or confused when asked to use them.

These pronouns work the same as the other personal pronoun sets and are often used by people who do not want to be identified by masculine, feminine, or ambiguous personal pronouns and the associations that these pronouns have are based in personal perception and preference.

Just because you are not familiar with a pronoun set, does not mean that you can choose to not use that set when requested, or that those pronouns are fake, or silly.

# NEOPRONONUS

## **It/It/Its**

This pronoun set is considered a neopronoun even though this pronoun set has been in use for a long time, because only recently has it been used as a personal pronoun.

**Example:** It is speaking. I listened to **it**. That backpack is **its**. **It** uses these pronouns for **itself**.

## **Ze/Hir/Hirs**

Pronounced, zhee, here, heres

**Example:** Ze is speaking. I listened to **hir**. That backpack is **hirs**. **Ze** uses these pronouns for **hirsself**.

## **Ze/Zir/Zirs**

Pronounced, zhee, zhere, zheres

**Example:** Ze is speaking. I listened to **zir**. That backpack is **zirs**. **Ze** uses these pronouns for **zirsself**.

# NEOPRONONUS

## **Xe/Xem/Xyrs**

Pronounced, zhee,  
zhem, zheres

**Example: Xe** is speaking. I listened to **xem**. That backpack is **xyrs**. **Xe** uses these pronouns for **xemself**.

## **Fae/Faer/Faers**

Pronounced, fay,  
fayer, fayerss

**Example: Fae** is speaking. I listened to **faer**. That backpack is **faers**. **Fae** uses these pronouns for **faerself**.

## **Ae/Aer/Aers**

Pronounced, ay, ayer,  
ayerss

**Example: Ae** is speaking. I listened to **aer**. That backpack is **aers**. **Ae** uses these pronouns for **aerself**.

# NEOPRONONUS

## **Ne/Nem/Nirs**

Pronounced, nee,  
nehm, neress

**Example: Ne** is speaking. I listened to **nem**. That backpack is **nirs**. **Ne** uses these pronouns for **nemself**.

## **Ve/Ver/Vis**

Pronounced, vhee,  
where, viss

**Example: Ve** is speaking. I listened to **ver**. That backpack is **vis**. **Ve** uses these pronouns for **verself**.

## **Ey/Em/Eirs**

Pronounced, eye, ehm,  
eerss

**Example: Ey** is speaking. I listened to **em**. That backpack is **eirs**. **Ey** uses these pronouns for **emself**.

# NEOPRONONUS

## **Per/Per/Pers**

Pronounced, perr,  
perr, perrss

**Example: Per** is speaking. I listened to **per**. That backpack is **pers**.

**Per** uses these pronouns for **perself**.

## **No Pronouns**

Some people choose to use no pronouns. This means that you should exclusively refer to them with their name, title, or other identifiers they specify.

**Example:** [Name] is speaking. I listened to Dr. That backpack is the mentors.

[Name] doesn't use personal pronouns.

## **Any/All Pronouns**

Some people choose to use all pronouns. Since there are many options for pronouns to choose from, it is important to ask what preferences the individual has, and to incorporate these preferences when speaking to, or referring to them.

# **NOUN-SELF PRONOUNS**

Some people choose to take other nouns to use as a pronoun. There is unlimited variation to these pronoun sets and it is best to ask for clarification on use and pronunciation if you are confused. Individuals who use noun-self pronoun sets often face difficulties with having these pronoun sets used, since these pronoun sets have come into popular use recently, and are mostly encountered being used online. Because of this, individuals who use noun-self pronouns might be more sensitive to questions or comments on their pronouns.

## **Examples:**

Name-self: [Name] is speaking. I listened to [Name].

That backpack is [Names]. [Name] likes [Name]self.

Ice-self: Ice is speaking. I listened to ice. That backpack is ices. Ice used these pronouns for iceself.

Abstract-self: Abstra is speaking. I listened to abstra.

That backpack is abstras. Abstra uses these pronouns for abstraself.

# PRONOUN USE

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Every person uses pronouns, but not everyone is actively aware of and defining their preferred and correct pronouns.

Often the concept of pronoun use is assumed to be exclusive to trans, nonbinary, and other gender variant individuals, but we all use pronouns to refer to ourselves and others in daily life.

The action of referring to someone with the wrong pronouns, either purposeful, or by accident, is called **misgendering**. Being referred to with the wrong pronouns can be incredibly mentally and/or emotionally difficult. This is especially true for people who are frequently misgendered purposefully.

# PRONOUN USE

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**Accidentally misgendering** someone is common and the generally preferred way to react to accidental misgendering is to correct, apologize quickly, and move on. If you have someone's permission to correct others on their behalf, and you hear them accidentally misgendered, reminding the person who made the mistake, of what the correct pronouns are and continue the conversation. If you accidentally misgender someone, correcting yourself and continuing the conversation, regardless of whether the person being referred to is present, is the preferred course of action.

**Maliciously misgendering** someone is a way to demean and invalidate someone's identity. This action is often taken against members of the LGBTQ+ community, especially trans and gender variant individuals.

# COMBINATIONS OF PRONOUN SETS

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## **Correct Pronouns:**

Correct Pronouns are the set(s) of pronouns that an individual feels accurately represents their identity, and are comfortable with the set(s) used in reference to them. Some individuals might have multiple sets of pronouns that are correct. Other individuals might have different sets of pronouns that are correct in different contexts. For example, a friend might classify he/him/his, and ze/zir/zirs as correct pronouns within the context of friends and family, but this friend could classify exclusively he/him/his as correct in the context of the classroom.

# COMBINATIONS OF PRONOUN SETS

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## **Preferred Pronouns:**

Preferred Pronouns are the set(s) of pronouns that an individual feels represents their identity and should be the set(s) used to refer to them.

Using someone's preferred pronoun set(s) consistently shows that you are respecting their identity, and identifying them as they would like to be viewed. Some individuals might have multiple sets of pronouns that are preferred. Other individuals might have different sets of pronouns that are preferred in different contexts.

For example, a friend might classify she/her/hers, and they/them/theirs as correct pronouns within the context of friends and family, but this friend could classify exclusively they/them/theirs as correct in the context of their workplace.

# COMBINATION OF PRONOUN SETS

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When an individual uses multiple sets of pronouns, it is important to find out in what manner you should use the different sets. Some people use multiple sets of pronouns because they present differently in various social scenarios.

Individuals who use multiple pronoun sets in this manner, often do so out of safety and comfort, so checking to be sure you know the correct and/or preferred pronouns to use in a new social situation is important.

Some people use multiple sets of correct pronouns but only one set of preferred pronouns. When used in this manner, it is not considered misgendering to use a correct pronoun over their preferred pronoun, but specific refusal to use the preferred pronoun to use a correct pronoun is generally considered misgendering.

Someone who uses any/all pronouns generally classifies all pronouns as correct. However, this does not mean that the individual does not have preferred set(s) of pronouns.

Using someone's preferred pronouns whenever possible is the best way to show support and respect.

# ALTERNATING SETS

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Some people who use multiple sets of pronouns will ask that you alternate each set. The frequency of alternating the set will vary between individuals but tend to range from changing every sentence, or each time you use a personal pronoun.

In this example Alex uses she/her/hers, xe/xem/xyrs, and they/them/theirs pronouns.

**Alternating by sentence:** Alex is meeting us after her class. Xe left xyrs backpack there. That's why they are running late

**Alternating by use:** Alex is coming over here from her class where xe had left their backpack.

# NON-STANDARDIZED CHANGE

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Some people who use multiple sets of pronouns will have a non standardized basis for when to use each set. Some individuals choose to change the pronouns they use depending on the situation. The reason for the preference to change is not important, and if the individual is not required to disclose why they use pronouns in this manner. For some people it is because of safety concerns, for some it is because it is easier and more comfortable. Other individuals might have their correct and preferred pronouns change in relation to their identity. Generally this is in regard to gender identity, but not always. These individuals may identify as non-binary, genderfluid, or another term. Depending on their identity at any given moment, their preferred change, and they will inform you of which pronoun set(s) to use.

# **EXAMPLES OF NON-STANDARDIZED CHANGE**

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In this example Alex uses they/them/theirs, and ey/em/eirs pronouns, but uses he/him/his pronouns around their parents.

**Situation dependent:** Alex is coming over today and they use ey/em/eirs and they/them/theirs pronouns, but they use he/him/his pronouns around eir parents. Oh hi Alex, and you must be his dad? Nice to meet you.

**Identity dependent:** Alex is genderflux and uses they/them/theirs or ey/em/eirs pronouns. What pronouns should we use for you today Alex? Let me know if you want me to switch to the other set.

Additionally, it should be noted that this is not an exhaustive list of pronouns. Identity is complicated and pronouns are one of the tools we use to navigate society, if you or someone you are interacting with uses pronouns not shown here or use ones shown here differently, differ to each individual as the expert and follow what makes them most comfortable.

Resources for finding, or trying new pronoun sets can be found online, or at the Women, Gender & Sexuality Resource Center.

If you wish to create a personal pronoun page the "Neutral Language Council" collective has resources at [pronouns.page](http://pronouns.page)