

Gender Pronouns

Q: What is a personal gender pronoun?

A: A “personal gender pronoun” (or PGP) is the pronoun that a person uses for themselves.

For example: If Xena’s personal pronouns are she, her, and hers, you could say “Xena ate her food because she was hungry.”

Q: What are Gender Neutral Pronouns?

A: Gender Neutral Pronouns are pronouns that do not associate a gender with the person or animal being discussed. A precedent for a gender neutral pronoun actually exists in English; both “ou” and “a” were accepted pronouns in the English language, but they died out in the 1400s.

Q: Why do we need Gender Neutral Pronouns?

A: Some languages, such as English, have no truly gender neutral third person pronoun available or commonly used, thus gender neutral pronouns are created in the interest of greater gender equity. In addition to being able to use them to refer to people whose genders are unknown to us at the moment of conversation, gender neutral pronouns can be a preferred option for some within the transgender and genderqueer communities.

Q: Isn’t ‘it’ gender-neutral?

A: “It” is used to denote objects, and thus is considered offensive in reference to people. Some transgender and gender non-conforming people report “it” being used in reference to them in demeaning, disgusted, and threatening ways.

Q: What are some examples of Gender Neutral Pronouns?

A: Two sets of commonly used gender neutral pronouns are below, along with their pronunciations and the gendered pronouns ‘he’ and ‘she’ for easy reference.

Subject	Object	Possessive Adjective	Possessive Pronoun	Reflexive
She	Her	Her	Hers	Herself
He	His	His	His	Himself
They	Them	Their	Their	Themselves
Ze /zee/	Hir /here/	Hir /here/	Hirs /heres/	Hirself /herself/
E /ee/	Em /em/	Eir /air/	Eirs /airs/	Emselves /emself/

Examples of how to use these pronouns:

<p>She went to her bedroom. He went to his bedroom. Ze went to hir bedroom. They went to their bedroom. E went to eir bedroom.</p>	<p>I am her sister. I am his sister. I am hir sister. I am their sister. I am eir sister.</p>	<p>She shaves herself. He shaves himself. Ze shaves hirsself. They shave themself. E shaves emself.</p>
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