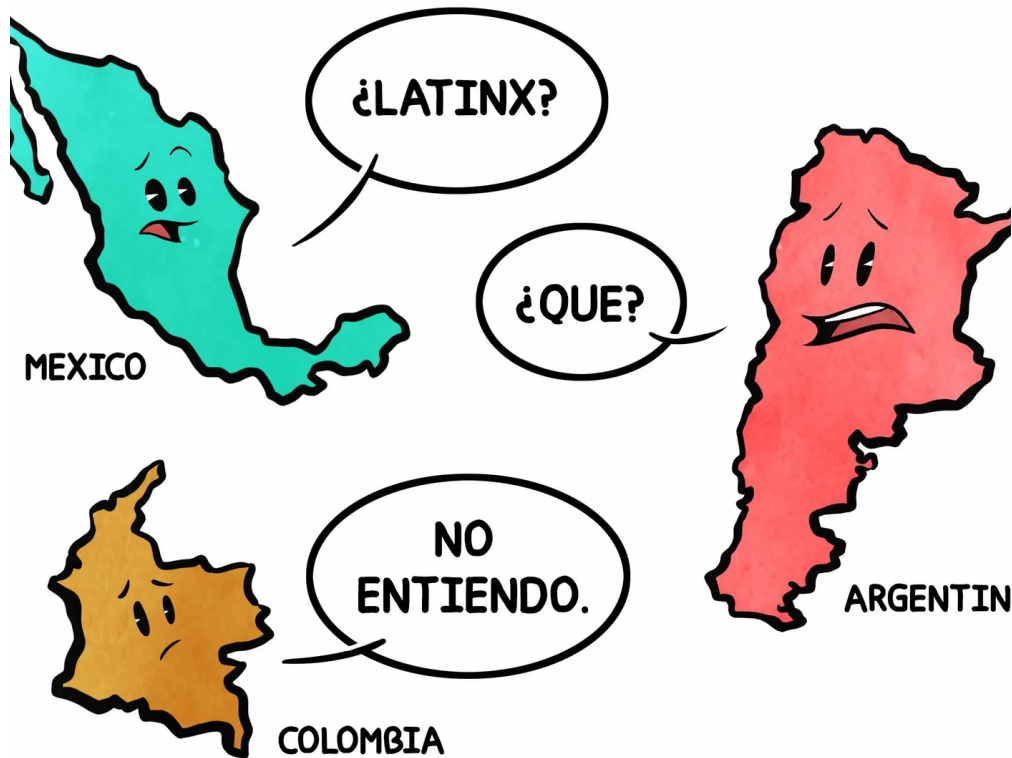


Vox



“Latinx” is growing in popularity. I made a comic to help you understand why.

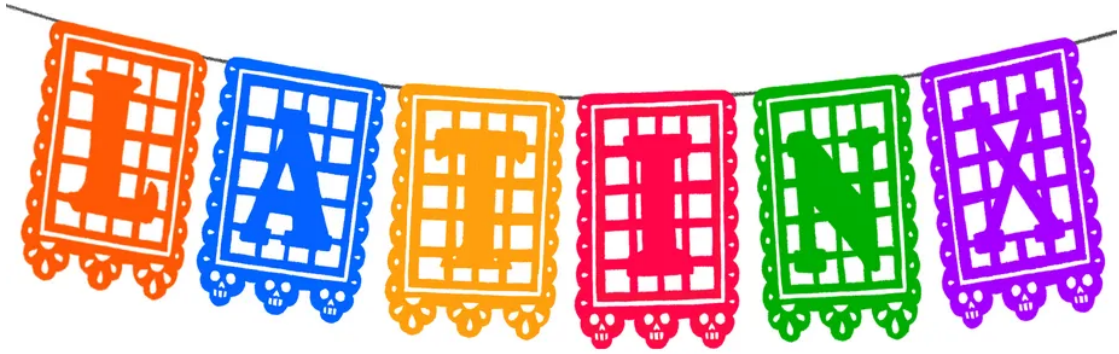
The gender-neutral term that’s supposed to be for everyone, well, isn’t.

By Terry Blas | Updated Oct 23, 2019, 7:15am EDT

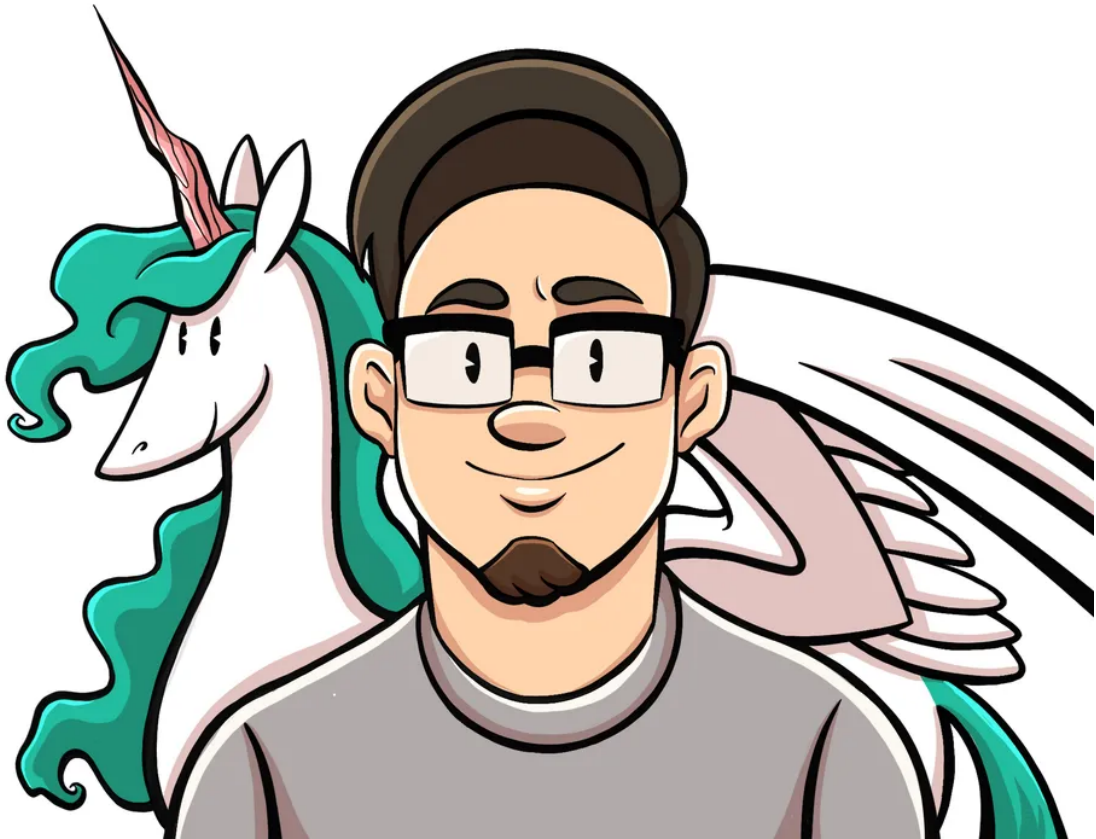
The
Highlight
BY Vox

Part of **Issue #7 of The Highlight**, our home for ambitious stories that explain our world.

YOU SAY



ANOTHER **MINI COMIC** BY **TERRY BLAS**



HELLO!

I'M AUTHOR, ILLUSTRATOR,
AND COMIC BOOK MAKER...

TERRY BIAS!

I MADE A COMIC A WHILE
BACK ABOUT THE TERMS
LATINO AND *HISPANIC*.

SOME OF YOU *LOVED* IT.
SOME OF YOU *HATED* IT.

BUT THAT'S LIFE, RIGHT?

WELL, THERE'S ANOTHER
TERM THAT I THINK IS BEING
USED WIDELY NOW THAT IS
CONFUSING TO SOME PEOPLE.
THAT TERM IS...



LATINX



ACCORDING TO A WIDELY SHARED OP-ED IN A COLLEGE
NEWSPAPER, WRITTEN BY GILBERT ORBEA AND GILBERT GUERRA,
LATINX IS A TERM THAT CAME INTO POPULAR USE IN THE
UNITED STATES AROUND OCTOBER 2014. THEY SAY IT'S
PROBLEMATIC AT BEST, DUE TO ENGLISH SPEAKERS IMPOSING
SOCIAL NORMS ON OTHER CULTURES.

BECAUSE OF ITS DIFFERENT PRONUNCIATIONS AND BECAUSE IT'S A RELATIVELY NEW TERM USED MOSTLY IN THE UNITED STATES, IT'S EASY TO BE CONFUSED BY IT.

I PERSONALLY HAVEN'T HEARD MANY PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN SPANISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES USE IT.



*RITA MORENO AS LYDIA RIERA ON ONE DAY AT A TIME, S 02 E 01.

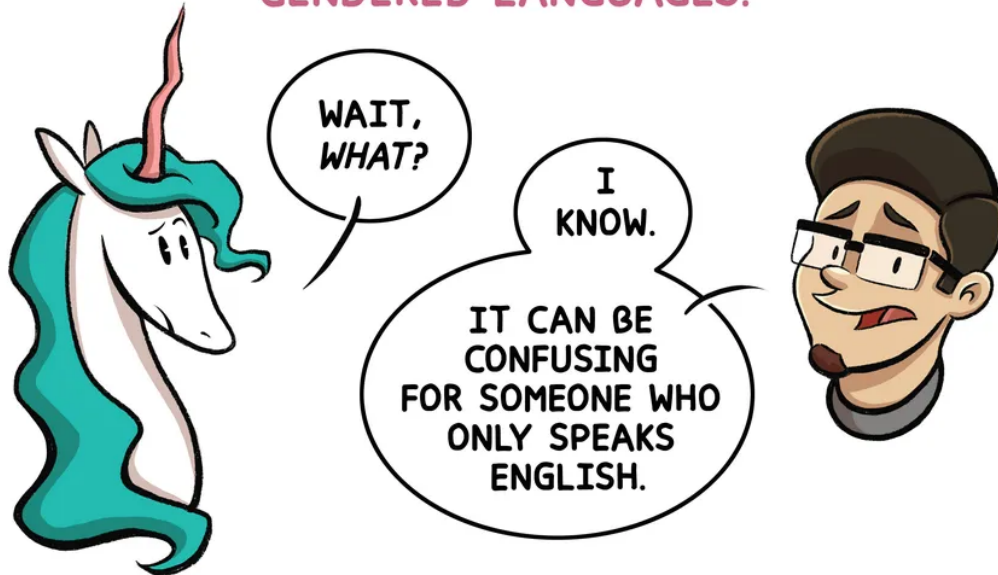
SO WHY ISN'T IT USED AS MUCH IN SPANISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES? I'M SURE THERE ARE SEVERAL REASONS, BUT MAYBE THIS IS ONE...

SPANISH...

LIKE FRENCH, PORTUGUESE, ITALIAN, ALONG WITH OTHER ROMANCE LANGUAGES, USES A MASCULINE-FEMININE NOUN CLASSIFICATION. IN OTHER WORDS:

ALL NOUNS ARE EITHER MASCULINE OR FEMININE.

SOME PEOPLE JUST SAY THESE ARE
"GENDERED LANGUAGES."



BEAR WITH ME. LET'S START HERE:

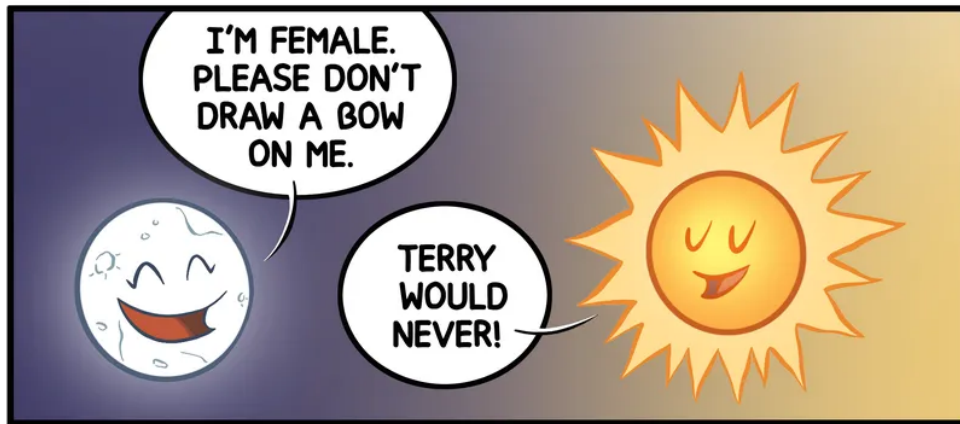
*IN SPANISH, THERE ARE TWO WORDS
FOR "THE."*

EL IS THE MASCULINE FORM OF "THE."

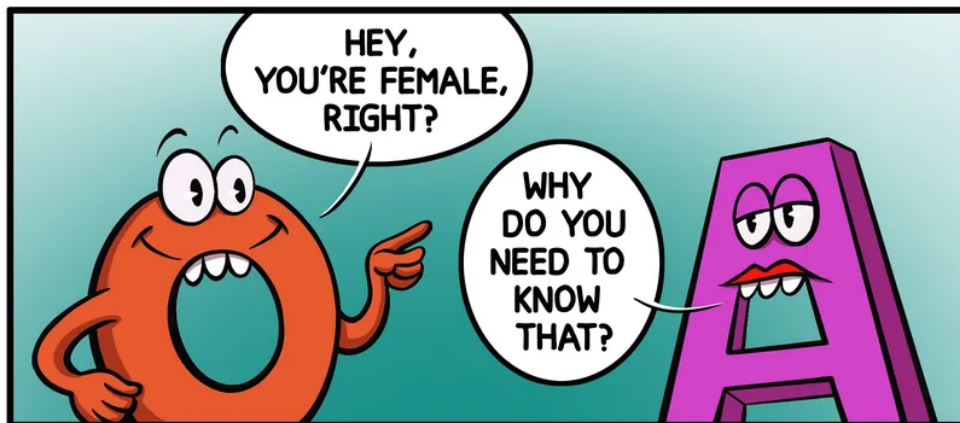
LA IS THE FEMININE FORM OF "THE."

HERE'S AN EXAMPLE OF BOTH USES OF "THE."

LA LUNA (THE MOON) **EL SOL** (THE SUN)

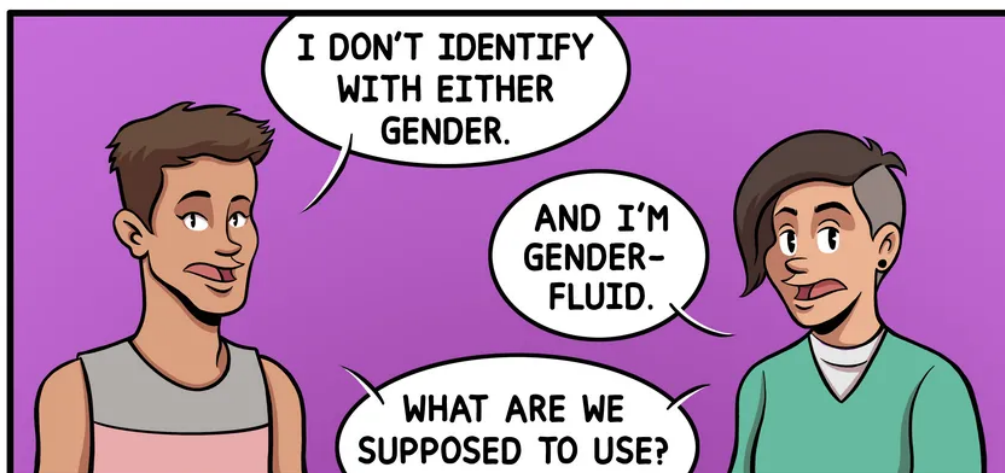


ALSO, THE LETTERS "O" AND "A" ARE USED TO INDICATE MALE AND FEMALE. THIS IS WHY PEOPLE SAY **LATINO** FOR MALE AND **LATINA** FOR FEMALE.



NOW HERE IS WHERE IT GETS TRICKY.

"O" IS ALSO THE LETTER USED WHEN REFERRING TO A COLLECTIVE GROUP OF MEN AND WOMEN. SO THE PLURAL WORD FOR A GROUP OF MALE AND FEMALE LATINOS IS... **LATINOS.**



WELL, HERE WE GO...

ONE SOLUTION MIGHT BE TO USE THIS:

LATINX

Definition:

A person of Latin American origin or descent (used as a gender-neutral or nonbinary alternative to Latino or Latina.)

BUT THIS ISN'T THE *ONLY* DEFINITION. IT'S JUST THE ONE THAT I FIND HELPS ME BEST UNDERSTAND THE TERM.

IF YOU FEEL THIS DEFINITION DOESN'T WORK FOR YOU, THAT'S FINE! DEFINITELY SEEK OUT YOUR OWN!



THE GILBERTS SAY THAT X AS A REPLACEMENT LETTER MAKES SPANISH UNPRONOUNCEABLE, NOT CONJUGATABLE, AND, FRANKLY, CONFUSING.



NOW, I'M NOT SOMEONE WHO THINKS *LANGUAGE* SHOULDN'T CHANGE. IT CHANGES ALL THE TIME.

BUT I SORT OF FELT LOST AS TO WHAT A GOOD SOLUTION WAS THAT WOULD ALLOW FOR SPANISH TO STAY *SPEAKABLE*.

AND THEN I DISCOVERED A *MEXICAN DRAG COMPETITION* ON YOUTUBE CALLED:



LA MAS DRAGA!

SERIOUSLY,
WATCH IT.

I HAD NO IDEA, BUT
IT'S HOSTED BY A
FRIEND OF MINE,

JOHNNY CARMONA!



WHEN WELCOMING THE CONTESTANTS, HE USED
THESE WORDS:

¡BIENVENIDOS A TODOS!

(THE MALE FORM OF "WELCOME EVERYONE")

BUT HE *REPLACED* EVERY GENDERED VOWEL
WITH AN...

E

SO WHAT HE ACTUALLY SAID WAS:

¡BIENVENIDES A TODES!

IT BLEW MY MIND!
IT WAS INCLUSIVE *AND* EASY TO PRONOUNCE!

HOLI
HOLI
HOLI



IT ROLLED OFF THE TONGUE! AND WHILE JOHNNY SAID HE'S BEEN CRITICIZED FOR USING "E," I FELT LIKE HE'D GIVEN ME SUCH A GREAT GIFT!

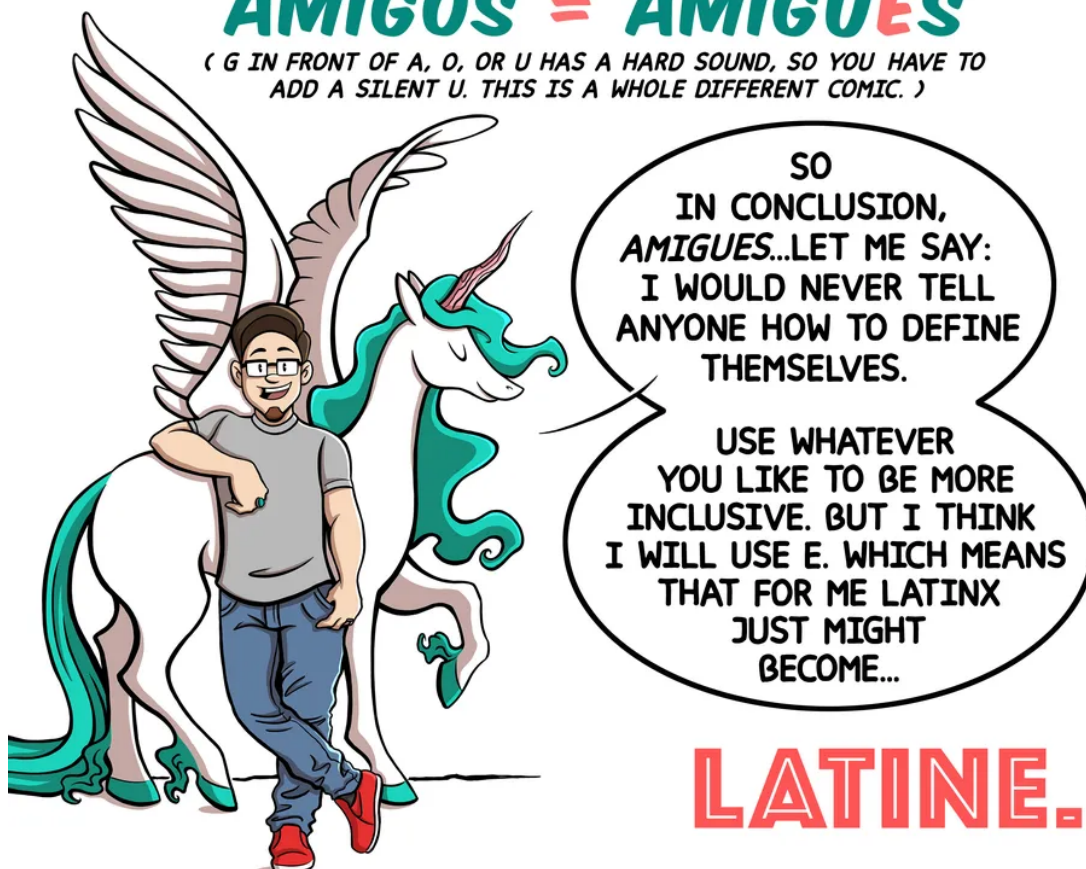
BESIDES, THERE'S ALWAYS GONNA BE HATERS. REMEMBER WHAT *RUPAUL* SAID:



PERSONALLY, I LIKE USING THE **E**. IT MAKES:

AMIGOS = AMIGUES

(G IN FRONT OF A, O, OR U HAS A HARD SOUND, SO YOU HAVE TO ADD A SILENT U. THIS IS A WHOLE DIFFERENT COMIC.)



Further reading

- "The argument against the use of the term 'Latinx'" by Gilbert Guerra and Gilbert Orbea

- **Isabella Gomez** explains “Latinx”
- **“Can we please stop using ‘latinx?’ Thanx.”** by Kurly Tlapoyawa

*Terry Blas is the illustrator and writer behind the autobiographical comics “Ghetto Swirl” and “**You Say Latino.**” Terry’s work has appeared in the comics Steven Universe, The Amazing World of Gumball, Adventure Time, and Rick and Morty. His first graphic novel, **Dead Weight: Murder at Camp Bloom**, is a murder mystery set at a weight-loss camp. His second graphic novel, **Hotel Dare**, is an all-ages sci-fi/fantasy/adventure inspired by his childhood memories of Mexico.*

More from this issue of The Highlight



Amanda Rose and her son at church in Magalia, California. | Mason Trinca for Vox

- **A year after the Camp Fire, Paradise wonders: Will it ever be the same?**
- **“It’s just a big illusion”: How homeopathy went from fringe medicine to the grocery aisles**
- **Is it time for American cities to stop growing?**
- **How to stop looking at your phone**

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Yes, I'll give

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The limits of forgiveness

FEATURES

How to forgive someone who isn't sorry

