

Guide to nonsexist language

Pronouns:

Each Person, To the Best of Her or His Ability

1. Address Your Reader

No. If he studies hard, a student can make the honor roll.

Yes. If you study hard, you can make the honor roll.

2. Eliminate the Pronoun

No. Each nurse determines the best way she can treat a patient.

Yes. Each nurse determines the best way to treat a patient.

3. Replace Pronouns With Articles

No. A careful secretary consults her dictionary often.

Yes. A careful secretary consults a dictionary often.

4. Use Plural Nouns and Pronouns

No. Teach the child to walk by himself.

He is expanding his operation.

Everyone needs his own space.

Yes. Teach children to walk by themselves.

They are expanding their operation.

All people need their own space.

(Note: We don't recommend using "their" to refer to a singular noun.)

5. Alternate Male and Female Pronouns Throughout Text.

No. The baby tries to put everything he finds in his mouth.

Yes. The baby tries to put everything she finds in her mouth.

6. Use Both Pronouns and Vary Their Order

No. A worker with minor children should make sure his will is up to date.

Yes. A worker with minor children should make sure her or his will is up to date.

7. Use Specific, Genderless, Nouns

No. The average man on the street speaks his mind on the issues.

Yes. The average voter speaks out on political issues.

8. Substitute Job titles or Descriptions

No. He gave a test on Monday.

Yes. The professor gave a test on Monday.

9. Repeat the Noun or Use a Synonym.

No. The professor who gets published frequently will have a better chance when he goes before the tenure board.

Yes. The professor who gets published frequently will have a better chance when faculty tenure is granted.

(Notes: Nations, battleships, gas tanks and other objects have no gender.)

Titles:

People Working

Replace Language Stereotyping Men

No: Businessman/men, Cameraman, Chairman, Congressmen, Craftsmen,

Deliveryman/boy, Draftsman, Fireman, Foreman, Guys, Headmaster, Kingpin, Lumber man, Male nurse, Manhole/cover, Man-hours, Manmade, Night Watchman, Policeman, Pressman, Repairman, handyman, Salesman/men, Spokesman, Sportsmanship, Statesman, Statesmanship, Steward/stewardess, Weatherman, Workmen.

Yes: Business person/people, people in business, executive, merchant, industrialist, entrepreneur, manager, Camera operator, photographer, Chairperson, chair, moderator, group leader, department head, presiding officer, Member of Congress, Representatives, congressmen and congresswomen, Craftsperson, artisan, Delivery driver/clerk, porter, deliverer, courier, messenger, Drafter, Fire fighter, Supervisor, Men or people, Principal, Key Person/Leader, Woodchopper, tree/lumber cutter, Nurse, Sewer hole, utility access/cover, Labor, staff/work hours, time, Manufactured, hand built, handmade, synthetic, simulated, machine made, Night guard, night watch, Police officer, detective, Press operator, Repairer (Better: plumber, electrician, carpenter, steam fitter's apprentice), Salespeople, salesperson(s), sales agent(s), sales associate(s), sales representative(s), sales force, Representative, spokesperson, advocate, proponent, Sports/outdoor enthusiast (Better: hunter, fisher, canoer), Fair play, Political leader, public servant, diplomat, Diplomacy, Flight attendant, Weather reporter, meteorologist, Workers.

Replace Titles Stereotyping Women

No: Authoress, Avatrix, Career girl/woman, Coed, Gal, Girl, Girl Friday, Housewife, lady of the house, Lady/female doctor, lawyer, Little lady, better half, Maid, Cleaning lady, Poetess, Sculptress, Usherette, Waitress, Working Wife/mother.

Yes: Author, Pilot, aviator, Professor, engineering, mathematician, administrative assistant, Student, Woman, secretary, assistant, aide (Better: full name), Homemaker, consumer, customer, shopper, parent, Doctor, Lawyer, Spouse, Partner, House worker, housekeeper, custodian, Poet, Sculptor, Usher, Waitperson/waiter, Worker.

Replace Stereotypical Adjectives and Expressions

No: Act like a lady and think like a man, Act like a gentleman, Dear Sir, Fatherland, Founding fathers, Gentleman's agreement, ladylike, girlish, sissy, effeminate, Lady luck, Layman, layman's terms, Maiden name, Maiden voyage, Male chauvinist, Male Ego, Man-sized, Man-to-man defense/talk, Manly, tomboy, Mother doing dishes, father reading the paper, Mothering, fathering, Motherly, Unwed mother, Woman did well for a woman/as well as a man, Woman's/man's work, Woman's page.

Yes: Act and think sensitively and clearly, Be polite, brave, keep your chin up, Dear Madam or Sir, Dear Personnel Officer/Director/Executive/Manager (Better: name), Homeland, native land, Pioneers, colonists, patriots, forebears, founders, Informal agreement, your word, oral contract, handshake, Tender, cooperative, polite, neat, fearful, weak, illogical, inactive (both male and female characteristics), Luck, Lay, common, ordinary, informal, non-technical, Birth name, First/premiere voyage, Chauvinist, Ego, Husky, sizable, big, large, voracious, Player-to-player, person-to-person, face-to-face, one-to-one,

Courageous, strong, vigorous, adventurous, spirited, direct, competitive, physical, mechanical, logical, rude, active, messy, self-confident (both female and male characteristics), Men and women doing dishes, women and men reading the paper, Parenting, child-rearing, Protective, supportive, kind, Mother, Woman did well, woman performed competently, Lifestyle, living section.

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