



IN THE HEART OF THE BEAST PUPPET AND MASK THEATRE

PRONOUNS GUIDE

At In the Heart of the Beast we value diversity, equity, and inclusion. We offer this Pronouns Guide in the spirit of learning and growth as we work to build more inclusive communities. You've likely noticed that our staff list their preferred pronouns on their email signature line. We ask that you respect and use those pronouns. Reading this resource is one way to help you to do so.

Some people don't feel that traditional gender pronouns (she/her, he/him) fit their gender identities. Transgender, genderqueer, and other gender-variant people may choose different pronouns for themselves. The following guide is a starting point for using pronouns with respect and care.

Why educate yourself about pronouns?

When you meet someone who uses they/them pronouns, you may want to ask lots of questions. That instinct comes from a really good place. However, marginalized folks are asked questions a lot, and answering them can take a surprising amount of time and emotional energy. That's why it's great that you are educating yourself about pronouns!

How do I know which pronouns to use?

If the person you're referring to is a stranger or brief acquaintance (like a server, cashier, fellow bus patron, etc), you may not need to know. If the person is a classmate, student, or coworker it is best to ask. Try making pronouns an optional part of introductions or check-ins at meetings or in class. You can also say:

- "What pronouns do you use?"
- "How would you like me to refer to you?"
- "How would you like to be addressed?"
- "My name is Tou and my pronouns are he and him. What about you?"

How often do pronouns change?

Remember that people may change their pronouns without changing their name, appearance, or gender identity. **Don't assume-** You can't tell a person's gender identity or pronouns based on how they look. Gender presentation isn't the same as gender identity, and neither presentation nor identity are a indicator of what pronouns someone uses. The only way to know what someone's pronouns are is to ask. Also, don't assume that someone's pronouns are fixed. Gender is fluid, and their pronouns may (or may not) change over time.

What if I make a mistake?

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, it makes the person feel like they need to console you. By correcting yourself, you're modeling respectful pronoun use for others in the conversation. If you only realize the mistake later, a brief apology can help.

When should I correct others?

When you hear someone use the wrong pronouns for a mutual friend, correct them. Some people may not want a lot of public attention to their pronouns, while others will appreciate you standing up for them. If someone uses the wrong pronoun for a person who isn't present, try a brief correction: "Sam uses she and her pronouns. And yes, I'm going to her house later too!" Part of being a good ally to non-binary, genderqueer, and trans people in your community is helping other people get pronouns right

Pronoun Chart

	Nominative (subject)	Objective (object)	Possessive determiner	Possessive Pronoun	Reflexive
Traditional pronouns					
He	<i>He</i> laughed	I called <i>him</i>	<i>His</i> eyes gleam	That is <i>his</i>	He likes <i>himself</i>
She	<i>She</i> laughed	I called <i>her</i>	<i>Her</i> eyes gleam	That is <i>hers</i>	She likes <i>herself</i>
Nonbinary pronouns These are often used by trans, genderqueer, and gender non-conforming people.					
They	<i>They</i> laughed	I called <i>them</i>	<i>Their</i> eyes gleam	That is <i>theirs</i>	They like <i>themselves</i>
Spivak	<i>Ey</i> laughed	I called <i>em</i>	<i>Eir</i> eyes gleam	That is <i>eirs</i>	<i>Ey</i> likes <i>emself</i>
Ze (or zie) and hir	<i>Ze</i> laughed ("zee")	I called <i>hir</i> ("heer")	<i>Hir</i> eyes gleam ("heer")	That is <i>hirs</i> ("heers")	<i>Ze</i> likes <i>hirsself</i> ("heerself")

Chart adapted from "The Need for a Gender-Neutral Pronoun," Gender Neutral Pronoun Blog, January 24 2001.
See many more pronouns in the chart at <http://genderneutralpronoun.wordpress.com/tag/ze-and-zir/>

It can be tough to remember pronouns at first. The best solution is to practice! Correct pronoun use is an easy step toward showing respect for people of every gender.

Additional Readings

This guide was adapted from and influenced by the following articles, which we encourage you to explore.

[They, Them Pronoun Info Sheet](#)

[Gender Pronoun Guide](#)

[A Guide to Non-binary Pronouns And Why They Matter](#)

Thank you for educating yourself and for your commitment to solidarity and allyship.

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