

Inclusive Language & Gender Neutral Pronoun Use

In 2016, the American Dialect Society elected “they” used as a gender-neutral third-person pronoun (other third person pronouns include “he” and “she”) as their word of the year. This served to signify a language change in line with social progress. You often see writing that uses “he/she” or “he or she” when the author is unsure of gender, but that still leaves out those who identify with a gender other than male/female. “They” is an acceptable third person solution to allow all readers to feel included in what you have written, regardless of their gender identity or personal pronouns.

How to Make Your Sentences All Gender-Inclusive

Option 1: Rephrase to make the subject plural, so the subsequent pronouns are too.

- Original sentence: "If a student comes to the University Writing Center, a consultant must work with him or her."
- *New sentence: "If students come to the University Writing Center, a consultant must work with them."*
- Original sentence: "Every student we see in the University Writing Center brings his or her assignment and experience to the session."
- *New sentence: "All of the students we see in the University Writing Center bring their assignments and experiences to the session."*

Option 2: Change "he or she" to they.

- Original sentence: "If a student comes to the University Writing Center, a consultant must work with him or her."
- *New sentence: "If a student comes to the University Writing Center, a consultant must work with them."*
- Original sentence: "Every student we see in the University Writing Center brings his or her assignment and experience to the session."
- *New sentence: "Every student we see in the University Writing Center brings their assignment and experience to the session."*

Note: If you employ option 2, we recommend that you put a note at the end of your paper that reads: **“This paper uses ‘they’ as singular third-person pronoun to be inclusive of all genders.”**