A Beginner's Guide to Pronouns

Pronouns are the words we use instead of someone's name to refer to them. Common pronouns include "she/her," "he/him," and gender-neutral pronouns like "they/them."

Refer to the chart below to learn more about different pronoun sets (note that some of these pronouns have variations and other spellings, so what you see here may not perfectly match the gender-neutral pronouns you might see elsewhere).

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The Ones You Already Know

Pronouns	**Subjective** The person doing the action. *"__ laughed."*	**Objective** The person the action happens to. *"I called __."*	**Possessive Adjective** Comes right before what they own. *"__ dog is friendly."*	**Possessive Pronoun** Stands in for the thing they own. *"That book is __."*	**Reflexive** The "-self" word referring back to the person. *"She drove __."*
He/him/his	He laughed.	I called him.	His dog is friendly.	That book is his.	He drove himself.
She/her/hers	She laughed.	I called her.	Her dog is friendly.	That book is hers.	She drove herself.

Gender Neutral: The Most Common

Pronouns	**Subjective** The person doing the action. *"__ laughed."*	**Objective** The person the action happens to. *"I called __."*	**Possessive Adjective** Comes right before what they own. *"__ dog is friendly."*	**Possessive Pronoun** Stands in for the thing they own. *"That book is __."*	**Reflexive** The "-self" word referring back to the person. *"She drove __."*
They/them/theirs	They laughed.	I called them.	Their dog is friendly.	That book is theirs.	They drove themself.

Tips For Pronoun Usage

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How to ask for someone else's pronouns

Start by sharing your own pronouns, then ask:

"I'm James, I use he/him pronouns. What pronouns do you use?"

If you make a mistake

Correct yourself, briefly apologize, and move on. Apologizing profusely or dwelling on the mistake can make the situation more awkward.

"She said—sorry, they said—the meeting has been rescheduled."

Don't make assumptions based on physical appearance

Remember that you can't tell someone's pronouns just by looking at them!

If you're unsure of someone's pronouns, you can use their name or the gender-neutral "they" until you're told the correct pronouns.

Practice, practice, practice!

Using new pronouns can feel difficult at first, but practice helps!

Practice saying them out loud in different sentences. It will only get easier.

Visit the ACLU of Missouri's **Show-Me My Rights Guide** for more information about the legal rights of TGNCI (transgender, nonbinary, gender non-conforming, and intersex) Missourians and how allies can support the community.

Scan the QR code of visit the link below:

https://www.aclu-mo.org/know-your-rights/your-rights-as-a-trans-person

For any questions or suggestions, email us at:

showmemyrights@aclu-mo.org

This information is not intended as legal advice.
