

# PLURAL DEBATE

One of the biggest issues that have surfaced with the use of they/them pronouns is that people argue over the grammatical correctness of its use on singular people.

The response to this argument is quite simple. Language changes all the time and the singular use of “they” has been around for centuries. Also, people use singular they/them pronouns all the time without knowing it! If you found a lost phone, you would probably say or think, “Hey, someone lost their phone, I must give it back to them.”

The gender of the owner is unknown, but only one person would own the phone. The pronouns came out naturally without having to think about it!

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## TIPS!

Practice! Practice! Practice! - Learning a new word, language, or term does not come naturally to everyone. In order to incorporate they/them pronouns into your normal vocabulary it will take time, patience and practice. Try using they/them pronouns when talking about God, a pet or objects. Try in the mirror or in groups or pairs try telling stories using only they/them pronouns!

Whenever you are ever unsure of when to use they/them pronouns for someone - just ask!

# AFFIRMING MINISTRIES COORDINATOR

The Affirming Ministries Coordinator provides a variety of services;

Congregational support before, during, and after the Affirming Process

Provide support for affirming committees, affirming groups, or LGBTQIA2S+/Spiritual events

Programming, education and workshops

Provide and/or create resources

Pastoral care for LGBTQIA2S+ and allies on their spiritual journey

& More!

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# THEY/THEM PRONOUNS

# WHAT ARE THEY/THEM PRONOUNS?

A pronoun is a word that refers to either the people talking (You or I) or someone or something that is being talked about (she, it, them, and this).

Gender pronouns (he/she/they/ze etc.) specifically refer to people that you are talking about.

Although the pronoun "they" tends to be thought of as gender neutral, a person who goes by "they" could identify as a man, a woman, both, neither, or another gender entirely.

# HISTORY OF "THEY"

The singular "they" had emerged by the 14th century, about a century after plural "they", which was borrowed from Old Norse in the 13th century. It has been commonly employed in everyday English ever since then, though it has become the target of criticism since the late-19th century.

Its use in formal English has become more common with the trend toward gender-neutral language. In the early 21st century, use of singular "they" with known individuals has been promoted for those who do not identify as male or female.

# LEARN & UNLEARN

Often, people make assumptions about the gender of another person based on a person's appearance or name. Then, they apply those assumptions to the pronouns and forms of address used to refer to a person. In order to get use to using they/them pronouns, one needs to unlearn gendering people. To do this, you need to subtract the knowledge you've learned about placing people into gendered boxes. Then you add the knowledge that some people may not use binary pronouns (he/she) regardless of what they look like. Once you practice and put effort into not gendering people based off name or appearance, the use of they/them becomes so much easier!

Pronouns	Subjective	Objective	Prenominal Possessive	Predicative Possessive	Reflexive
Plural They	They	Them	Their	Theirs	Themselves
Singular They	They	Them	Their	Theirs	Themselves

***"They are a writer and wrote that book themselves. Those ideas are theirs. I like both them and their ideas."***