



Gender neutral

Being inclusive and respecting others

Pronouns & possessive adjectives

Subject pronouns (SP): **I** like chocolate **She** works there

Object pronouns (OP): I don't like **him** Please give **us** some water

Possessive adjectives (PA): Is this **your** book? I am **their** teacher

Possessive pronouns (PP): Your house is big – **ours** (= our house) is smaller

Reflexive pronouns (RP): We enjoyed **ourselves** at the party

Singular:	Plural:	Singular & Plural:
SP – OP – PA – PP – RP	SP – OP – PA – PP – RP	SP – OP – PA – PP – RP
I – me – my – mine – myself	we – us – our – ours – ourselves	you – you – your – yours – yourself / yourselves
she – her – her – hers – herself		<i>thou – thee – thy – thine – thyself/thyselfes</i> Also: <i>y'all (US)</i>
he – him – his – his – himself		they – them – their – their – themselves / themselves
it – it – its – its – itself		NOTE - 'they' has been singular and plural for over 600 years!

Some examples of singular 'they' and non-binary 'they'

Singular 'they': gender unknown or not relevant

- **One student** could not come to class because **they** were sick.
- Can I see **a doctor** today? I really need to ask **them** something important.
- **Everyone** should wear **their** mask when **they** enter the building.
- A: There's **someone** on the phone for you. B: What do **they** want?

Non-binary gender

- **Sam** identifies as non-binary. **They** want to be open about **their** new identity.

Can we use 'he or she' or 's/he'?

Yes, you can, but:

- it's not linguistically efficient
- which comes first? 'she or he', 'him or her'?
- you need to be consistent
- 'she or he' and 's/he' excludes people who identify as non-binary

So what's the best solution?

- use 'they', 'them', 'their', 'theirs', 'themselves' (singular), 'themselves' (plural)

Exercise – complete the sentences with a neutral pronoun

1. If anybody wants to speak to me after the class, could _____ wait a couple of minutes?
2. When somebody comes to take away the plates, could you ask _____ to bring some more water.
3. Anyone can learn a language if _____ are motivated.
4. The person who left _____ wallet in class can collect it from my office if _____ can prove it is _____.
5. Each parent/child relationship is different and the only expert is the parent _____.
6. I'm bringing a non-binary friend to dinner - _____ name is Alex.

Answers

1. If anybody wants to speak to me after the class, could **they** wait a couple of minutes?
2. When somebody comes to take away the plates, could you ask **them** to bring some more water.
3. Anyone can learn a language if **they** are motivated.
4. The person who left **their** wallet in class can collect it from my office if **they** can prove it is **theirs**.
5. Each parent/child relationship is different and the only expert is the parent **themselves**.
6. I'm bringing a non-binary friend to dinner - **their** name is Alex.

Professions

superhero

server

businessperson

police officer

firefighter

headteacher

actor

flight attendant

