



Writing Practice

A Starting Place Discussion Guide for Writers, Editors and Journalists

Gender: Your Guide (GYG) is aimed at people who may not know much about gender diversity, and welcomes beginners into the project of making spaces where gender is less rigid: a source of more joy and less harm. This discussion guide offers a starting place for people whose work centres written communication.

Before you host the discussion... read at least Chapters 1 through 6, and familiarize yourself with the content on grammar, particularly the grammatical correctness of singular they/them: sidebars on p. 97, 110 and 194; and 'The Grammar Argument' section in Chapter 9 (pp. 193-195).

Suggested advanced reading for everyone:

- Chapter 3: Understanding the Transgender Spectrum + Chapter 4: A Gender-Neutral Pronoun Primer

Begin your discussion by... encouraging participants to share their own challenges with singular they usage and reflect on how these challenges are addressed in the chapters they read in advance.

Suggested group readings (together, aloud) and activities:

- Read the sidebars on p. 97 and 110, and 'The Grammar Argument' section in Chapter 9 (pp. 193-195)
 - What conversations have you had with other professionals about singular they/them? How does what you read together address issues raised in these conversations?
- Read Chapter 4: A Gender-Neutral Pronoun Primer (pp. 106-111, no sidebar)
 - Discuss your experiences of completing the box (p. 108) when reading in advance on your own.
 - Select (whether ahead of time or when everyone is together) a few brief passages from news stories, novels, etc. In pairs, 'translate' all gendered (she/her or he/him) pronouns to singular they/them pronouns. What sentence structure changes do you have to make? When is it easier to avoid pronouns, and is this the best choice, in your view?
- Read Chapter 5: Strategies for Using Peoples' Pronouns Correctly (pp. 129-134)
 - Adapt the tips for asking privately, listening and paying attention to situations where you are writing about or quoting someone you do not know. How could you find out their pronouns?
- Read the sidebar on p. 194: 'Responding To An (In)Correction.'
 - Have you ever encountered (or been) an (in)corrector? Discuss some of the particular issues that can arise in newsrooms, publishers or other settings where an (in)corrector is in a position of power. What can you do in this situation?
- Read Chapter 6: Noticing and Changing Gendered Language (pp. 149-150).
 - Brainstorm some gender-friendly ways to convey formality and respect in the different genres that participants are writing in.

Next steps:

- Make a plan to read and discuss together the implications of [GLAAD Media Reference Guide - In Focus: Covering the Transgender Community](#) for your own areas of practice.