

Neopronouns Explained

Pronouns are words that a person may use to identify themselves instead of their name. For example, she/her/hers and he/him/his are typically feminine and masculine pronouns, respectively. However, some feel more comfortable with gender-neutral pronouns. The most common gender-neutral pronouns are they/them/theirs, used in the singular to refer to an individual in a way that isn't gendered. Some people will use more than one set of pronouns, and you are encouraged to alternate among them in conversation.

Neopronouns are a category of new (neo) pronouns that are increasingly used in place of "she," "he," or "they" when referring to a person. Some examples include: xe/xem/xyr, ze/hir/hirs, and ey/em/eir. Neopronouns can be used by anyone, though most often they are used by transgender, non-binary, and/or gender nonconforming people.

Common neopronouns, with the singular 'they' included for reference, and examples of how they are used

	Subject Pronouns	Object Pronouns	Possessive Adjectives	Possessive Pronouns	Reflexive Pronouns
They	<i>They</i> laughed	I called <i>them</i>	<i>Their</i> eyes gleam	That is <i>theirs</i>	<i>They</i> like <i>themselves</i>
Ne	<i>Ne</i> laughed	I called <i>nem</i>	<i>Nir</i> eyes gleam	That is <i>nirs</i>	Ne likes <i>nemself</i>
Ve	<i>Ve</i> laughed	I called <i>ver</i>	<i>Vis</i> eyes gleam	That is <i>vis</i>	Ve likes <i>verself</i>
Spivak	<i>Ey</i> laughed	I called <i>em</i>	<i>Eir</i> eyes gleam	That is <i>eirs</i>	<i>Ey</i> likes <i>emself</i>
Ze/Zie and Hir	<i>Ze</i> laughed	I called <i>hir</i>	<i>Hir</i> eyes gleam	That is <i>hirs</i>	<i>Ze</i> likes <i>hirsself</i>
Ze/Zie and Zir	<i>Ze</i> laughed	I called <i>zir</i>	<i>Zir</i> eyes gleam	That is <i>zirs</i>	<i>Ze</i> likes <i>zirsself</i>
Xe	<i>Xe</i> laughed	I called <i>xem</i>	<i>Xyr</i> eyes gleam	That is <i>xyrs</i>	<i>Xe</i> likes <i>xemself</i>

Don't panic over pronunciation! While there are common ways to pronounce these pronouns, there are many variations, so it is best to ask. If someone trusts you enough to share their pronouns with you, you should feel comfortable asking for clarification if you need it! For example, "Hey there, Taylor, I noticed the pronoun "x-e" on your nametag and I want to make sure I am pronouncing that right. Can you tell me how you pronounce it?". You also might find yourself in a situation where you hear a pronoun you aren't familiar with and don't know how to use. Try this: "Taylor, I heard you say you use "ze/zir" pronouns and I want to make sure I'm using them correctly. Can you help me?".

Don't want to put someone on the spot? Want to be better prepared and more knowledgeable about using neopronouns? Practice, practice, practice! Minus 18 is an online network driven by LGBTQ+ youth in Australia, and they have created a wonderful online app where you can practice with many pronouns and neopronouns.

Practice, here: <https://www.minus18.org.au/pronouns-app>



Blevins, K. R. (2018, May). Defining: Neopronouns. Retrieved September 19, 2018, from <http://mykidisgay.com/defining-neopronouns/>

(2017, June). Why Pronouns Matter. Retrieved September 19, 2018, from <https://intercultural.uncg.edu/student-advocacy-outreach/lgbt-community/lgbtq-resources/trans-resources/why-pronouns-matter>