

Guidelines for Inclusive Language in English

The Rose+Croix Journal supports the use of inclusive language about human beings and the Deity. This is consistent with the Rosicrucian approach that thought manifests reality, and therefore, how we think and speak is literally efficacious in creating equality among all women and men. This form of writing can be done artfully, and should never stand out or be awkward. The following guidelines propose general principles, and then give examples. The creativity and art of each author is called upon in these cases to rethink sentences and phrases to find just the right expressions to use.

According to the maxim, “Art conceals art,” the skillfully edited text will never appear to have been written any other way: “What is wanted, in short, is a kind of invisible gender neutrality. There are many ways to achieve such language, but it takes thought and often some hard work.”¹

GUIDELINES:

(1) In language about human beings, “Humanity,” “Humans,” “Human Beings,” “Men and Women,” “Persons,” “We/us,” and other similar terms (according to the context) should be used to represent the collectivity of humanity. Sentences may be changed from singular to plural if needed, and where appropriate, articles may substitute for pronouns. Here are some examples, as suggestions:

Each employee should come to the office to pick up his paycheck. →
All employees should come to the office to pick up their paychecks. OR
Each employee should come to the office to pick up her or his paycheck. OR
Paychecks are now available at the office for all employees.

Man is never fully aware of his destiny until the moment of enlightenment. →
Humanity is never fully aware of its destiny until the moment of enlightenment. OR
As humans, we are never fully aware of our destiny until the moment of enlightenment.

Tomorrow I will meet my new doctor; I hope he is friendly. →
Tomorrow I will meet my new doctor, who I hope is friendly.

Some boy or girl left her lunch box on the bus →
Some child left a lunch box on the bus.²

The worker who gets paint on his hands should inform his supervisor →
The worker who gets paint on the hands should inform the supervisor OR
Workers who get paint on their hands should inform their supervisor.

¹ *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 233.

² Example from *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 157.

An excellent summary of this subject, as well as many examples, may be found at <http://www.apa.udel.edu/apa/publications/texts/nonsexist.html> , published by the American Philosophical Association.

(2) **In language about Deity**, we have two different contexts:

- (a) When writing about Gods and Goddesses in a polytheistic context, the gender of each one is expressed appropriately as if writing about a specific human being.
 - a. For example, “Zeus threw his thunderbolt,” or “Isis protects those who pray to her.”
 - b. The same would be true of gendered incarnations of Divinity, whether in polytheism or monotheism: “Krishna drove his chariot forward,” “Jesus spoke to his disciples,” “Sophia has entered into the souls of those she has chosen.”

- (b) When writing about the monotheistic God, or the esoteric conception of God as the supreme being, however one might conceive of this, gender neutral language should be used, such as “Divinity,” “Divine,” “Deity.” Here are some examples:

God stretched forth his hand and brought rain to the parched land. →
The Divine stretched forth a hand and brought rain to the parched land. OR
The Deity stretched forth the Divine hand and brought rain to the parched land. OR
Divine favor brought rain to the parched land.

In meditation, we come to union with God and feel his presence. →
In meditation, we come to union with Divinity and feel the Divine presence.

God reveals himself through creation. →
The Deity reveals Divinity through creation. OR
The Divine reveals itself through creation.

From: *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th Edition. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 233:

BIAS-FREE LANGUAGE

5.203 Maintaining credibility. Biased language-language that is either sexist or suggestive of other conscious or subconscious prejudices that are not central to the meaning of the work-distracts and may even offend readers, and in their eyes it makes the work less credible. Few texts warrant the deliberate display of linguistic biases. Nor is it ideal, however, to call attention to the supposed absence of linguistic biases, since this will also distract readers and weaken credibility.

5.204 Gender bias. Consider the issue of gender-neutral language. On the one hand, it is unacceptable to a great many reasonable readers to use the generic masculine pronoun (*he* in reference to no one in particular). On the other hand, it is unacceptable to a great many readers either to resort to nontraditional gimmicks to avoid the generic masculine (by using *he/she* or *s/he*, for example) or to use *they* as a kind of singular pronoun. Either way, credibility is lost with some readers. What is wanted, in short, is a kind of invisible gender neutrality. There are many ways to achieve such language, but it takes thought and often some hard work. See 5.43, 5.51, 5.78.

5.205 Other biases. The same is true of other types of biases, such as slighting allusions, assumptions, or stereotypes based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, or birth or family status. Careful writers avoid language that reasonable readers might find offensive or distracting - unless the biased language is central to the meaning of the writing.

5.206 Editor's responsibility. A careful editor points out to authors any biased terms or approaches in the work (knowing, of course, that the bias may **have** been unintentional), suggests alternatives, and ensures that any biased language that is retained is retained by choice. Although some publishers prefer to avoid certain terms or specific usages in all cases, Chicago **does not** maintain a list of words or usages considered unacceptable. Rather, its editors adhere to the reasoning presented here and apply it to individual cases. They consult guides to avoiding bias in writing (see bibliog. 1.2) and work with authors to use the most appropriate language for the work.

From *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th Edition. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 866:

Selected Bibliographic references on Bias Free Language from section 1.2:

Baron, Dennis. *Grammar and Gender*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.

Maggio, Rosalie. *Talking about People: A Guide to Fair and Accurate Language*. Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1997.

Schwartz, Marilyn. *Guidelines for Bias-Free Writing*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.

Other sections referred to from *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th Edition. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003):

5.43 *Antecedents of different genders*. If the antecedents are of different genders and are joined by *and*, a plural pronoun is normally used to refer to them (the sister and brother are visiting their aunt). But if a pronoun refers to only one of the antecedent nouns connected by *and*, the pronoun's gender is that of the noun referred to (the uncle and niece rode in his car}. A special problem arises when the antecedent nouns are singular, are of different genders or an indeterminate gender, and are joined by *or*, or *nor*. Using *he*, *his*, and *him* as common-sex pronouns is now widely considered sexist, if not misleading, and picking the gender of the nearest antecedent may be equally misleading (e.g., some boy or girl left her lunch box on the bus). A good writer can usually recast the sentence to eliminate the need for any personal pronoun at all (some child left a lunch box on the bus).

5.51. *Special uses*. Some personal pronouns have special uses. (1) *He*, *him*, and *his* have traditionally been used as pronouns of indeterminate gender equally applicable to a male or female person (if the finder returns my watch, he will receive a reward). Because these pronouns are also masculine-specific, they have long been regarded as sexist when used generically, and their indeterminate-gender use is declining. (See 5.43, 5.204.) (2) *It* eliminates gender even if the noun's sex could be identified. Using *it* does not mean that the noun has no sex—only that the sex is unknown or unimportant (the baby is smiling at its mother. The mockingbird is building its nest) (3) *We*, *you*, and *they* can be used indefinitely, that is, without antecedents, in the sense of "persons," "one," or "people in general: *We* is sometimes used by an individual who is speaking for a group (the council's representative declared, "We appreciate your concern." The magazines editor wrote, "In our last issue, we covered the archaeological survey of Peru." This latter use is called the editorial *we*. Some writers also use *we* to make their prose appear less personal and to draw in the reader or listener (from these results we can draw only one conclusion). *You* can apply indefinitely to any person or all persons (if *you* read this book, you will learn how to influence people} (*you* is indefinite—anyone who reads the book will learn). The same is true of *they* (they say that Stonehenge may have been a primitive calendar) (*they* are unidentified and, perhaps, unimportant). (4) *It* also has several uses as an indefinite pronoun: (a) it may refer to a phrase, clause, sentence, or implied thought (he said that the Web site is down, but I don't believe it. The clause might be rewritten I don't believe what he said. (b) it can be the subject of a verb (usually a form of *to be*) without an antecedent noun (it was too far), or an introductory word or expletive for a phrase or clause that follows the verb (it is possible that Dody is on vacation). (c) *it* can be the grammatical subject of an expression about time or weather (it is almost midnight. It is beginning to snow); and (d) it may be an expletive that anticipates the true grammatical subject or object (I find it hard to wake up). Using the indefinite *it* carelessly may result in

obscurity—for example, Paul asked about my cough again; it is starting to annoy me (What is annoying, Paul's asking or the cough?); My cousin *is* a doctor It is an interesting profession (there is no noun naming the profession [medicine], so it lacks a necessary antecedent).

5.78 *Article as pronoun substitute.* An article may sometimes substitute for a pronoun. For example, the blanks in *a patient who develops the described rash on ___ hands should inform ___ doctor* may be filled in with the pronoun phrase *his or her* or the article *the*.