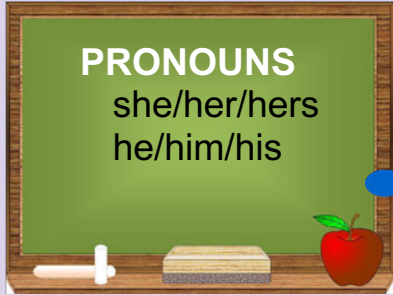**Wed, October 20, 2021**

"International Pronouns Day seeks to make respecting, sharing, and educating about personal pronouns commonplace."

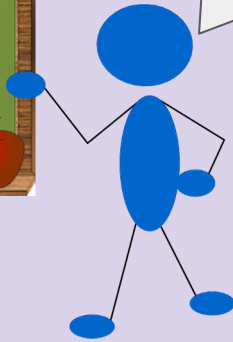# Don't wait for PRIDE to talk about pronouns!

Use the following slides to briefly explain pronouns to your students including the singular "they" personal pronoun. The more exposure students have, the more commonplace it will become.

Find more info about International Pronouns Day on their website:
https://pronounsday.org/

Let's try that without pronouns
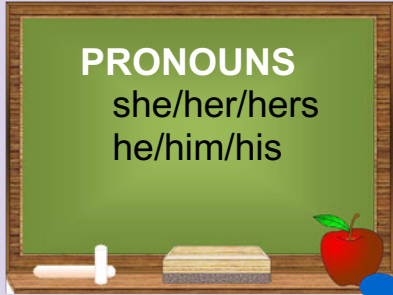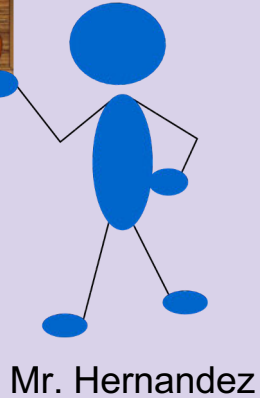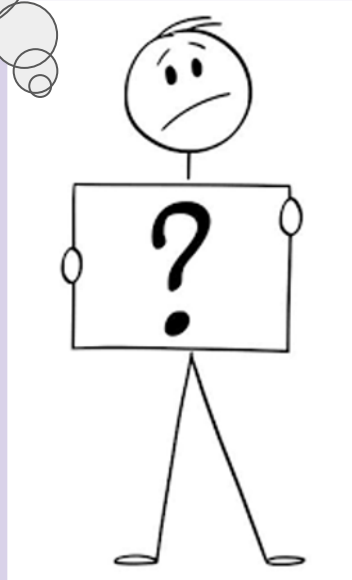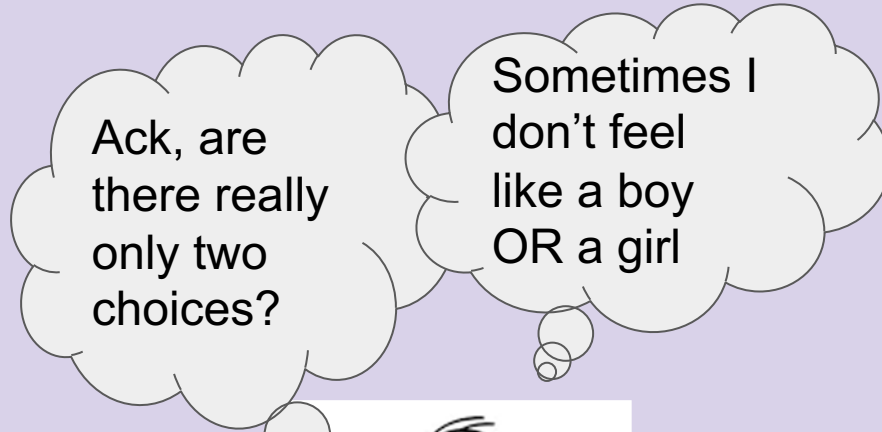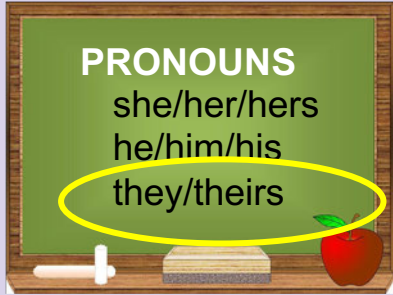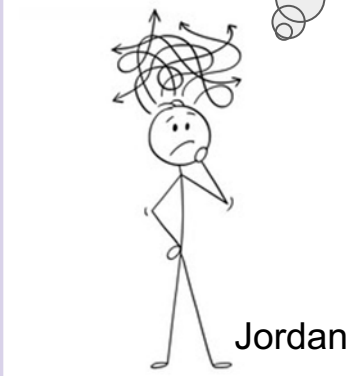
People Discuss Their Pronouns and How They Feel When People Use Their Proper Ones

For Secondary Only

Practice using gender neutral terms to avoid making assumptions

Instead of men and women, use everyone.

Instead of sister or brother, use sibling.

Instead of male and female, use human.

Instead of wife or husband, use spouse.

Gender Inclusive Terms

Instead of girls and boys, use kids.

Instead of he or she, use them.

Instead of using Mr., Ms., Mrs., use Mx.

Instead of his or her, use their.

Happy Pronouns Day!

Be who you are

If you want to include additional information about LGBTQ Identities

→ Recommended for Secondary

LGBTQ identities are about adding a little 'wiggle room'

Our world loves binaries

Persimmons

Oranges

Kumquats

Pumpkins

Carrots

Strawberries

Pomegranate

Tomatoes

Peppers

Cherries
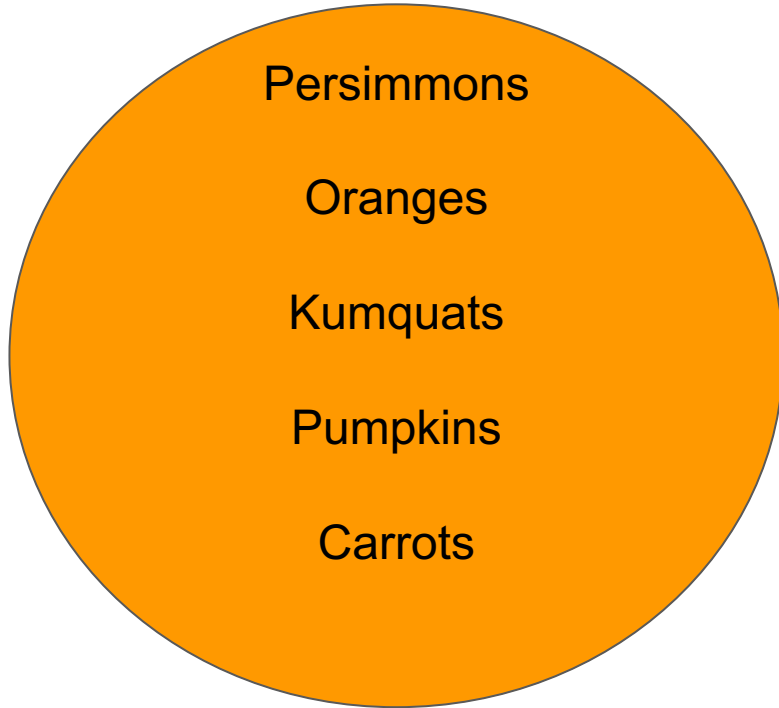
Orange Fruits and Vegetables

Red Fruits and Vegetables

Orange

Pumpkin

Cherries

Carrots

Tomatoes

Peppers

Persimmon

Kumquat

Strawberries

Pomegranate
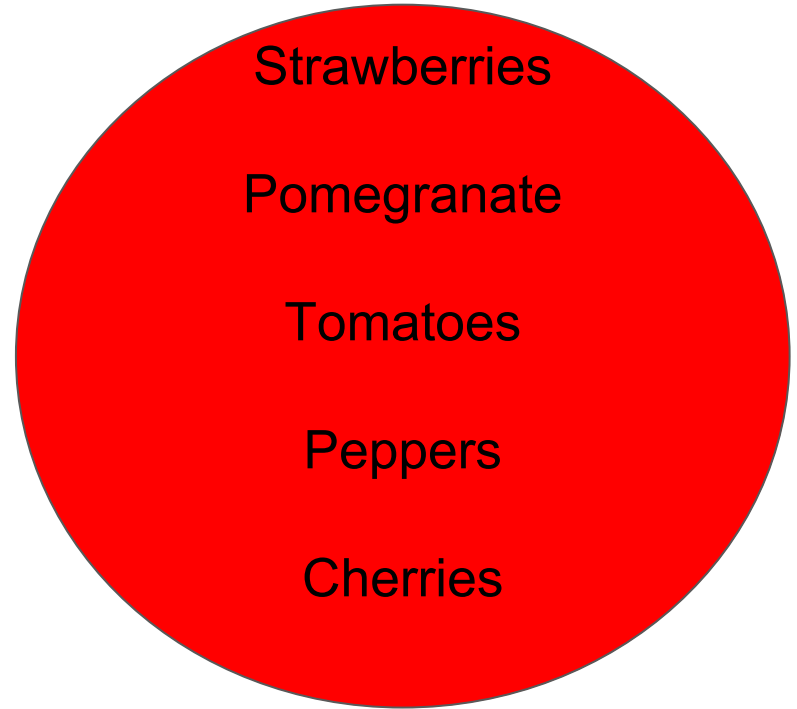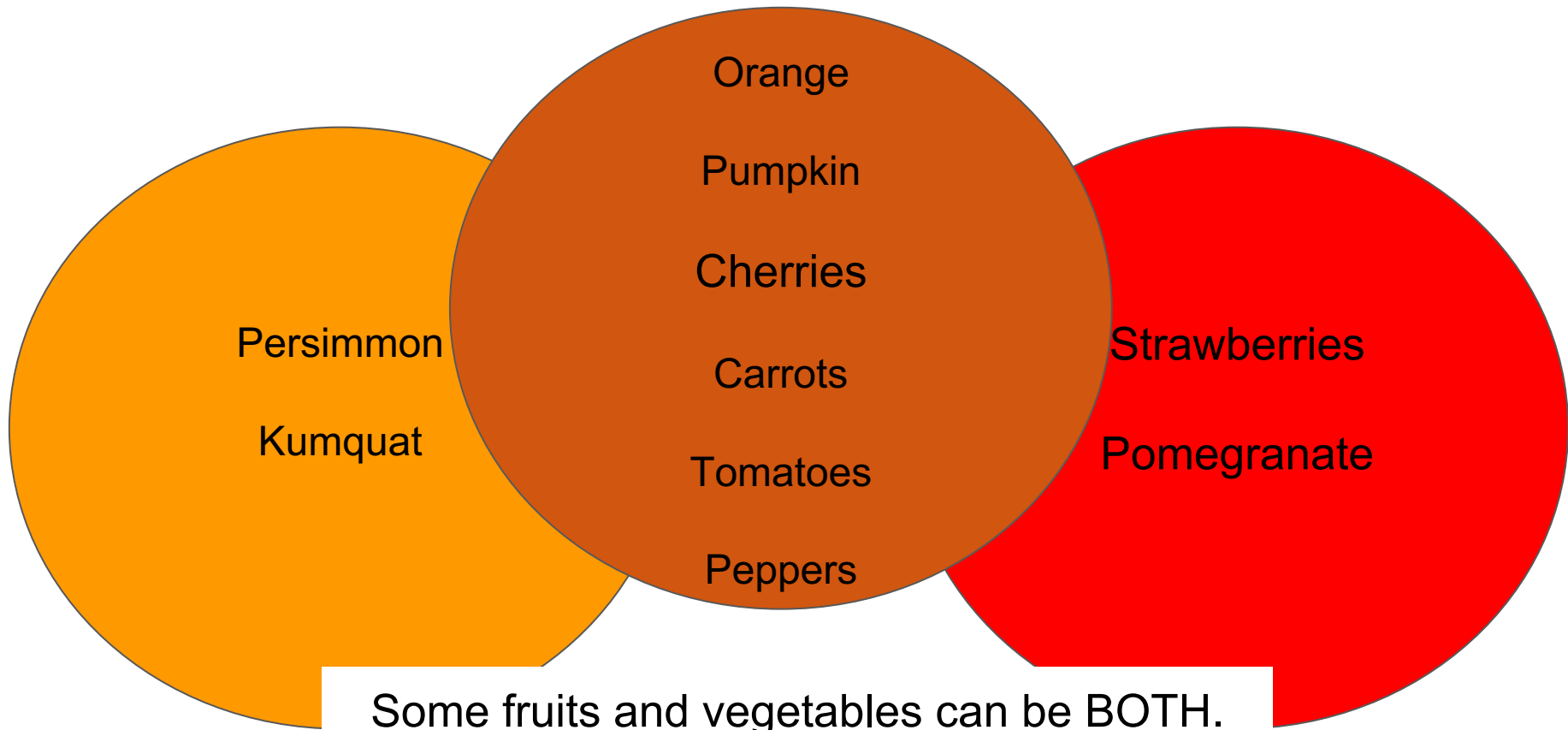
Some fruits and vegetables can be BOTH.
Even ones we don't *typically* think of that way.

Queering Identity

1) **Gender Expression**:

How you show your gender identity

2) **Gender Identity**:

Who you feel you are inside

3) **Sexual Orientation**:

Who you want to "get squishy" with

4) **Sex Assigned at Birth**:

Label given at birth, based on your body parts
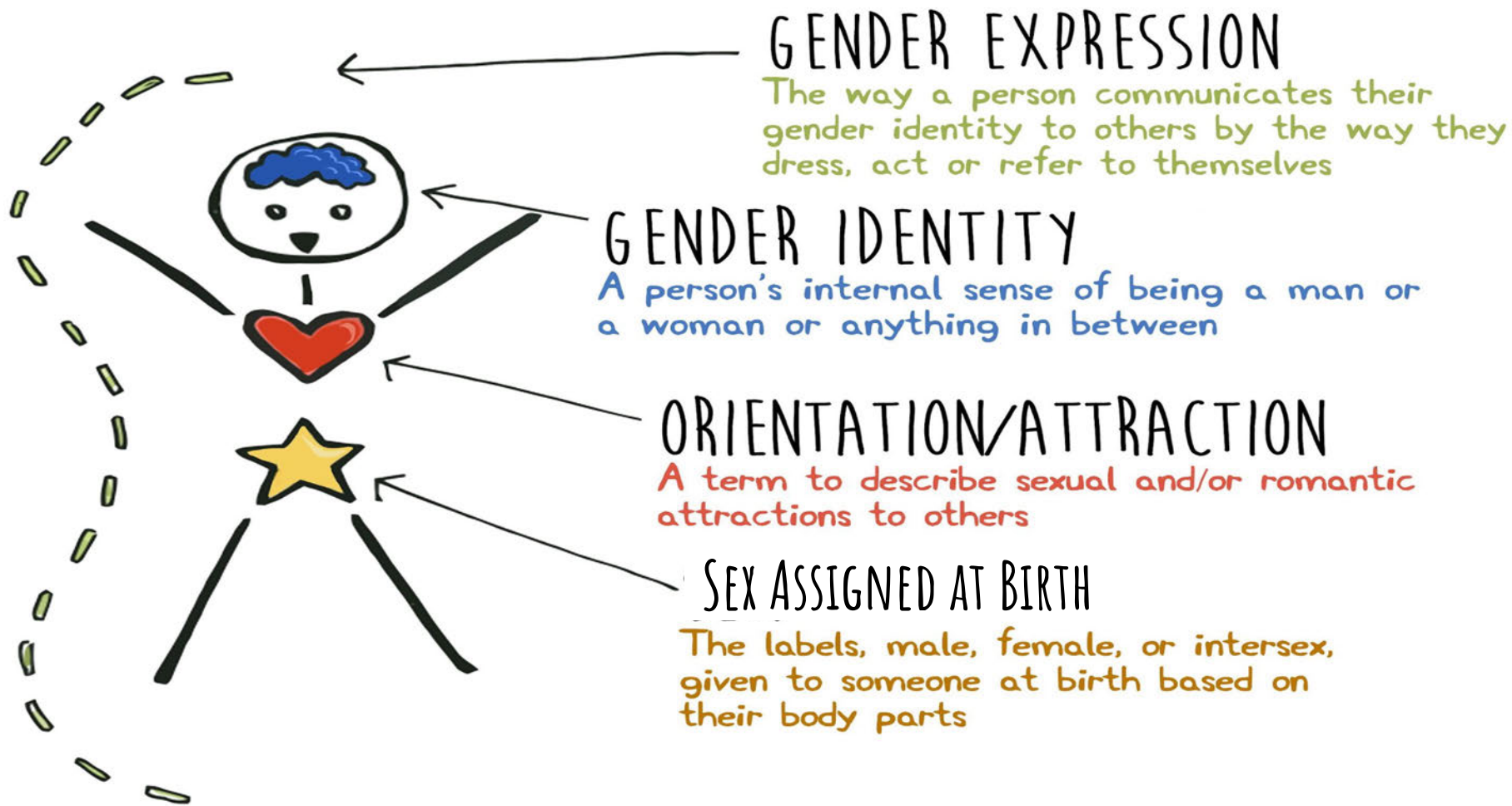
GENDER EXPRESSION
The way a person communicates their gender identity to others by the way they dress, act or refer to themselves

GENDER IDENTITY
A person's internal sense of being a man or a woman or anything in between

ORIENTATION/ATTRACTION
A term to describe sexual and/or romantic attractions to others

Sex Assigned at Birth
The labels, male, female, or intersex, given to someone at birth based on their body parts

Transgender

Binary
Trans man   Trans woman

Non-Binary
Genderqueer   Genderfluid
Agender
And more!
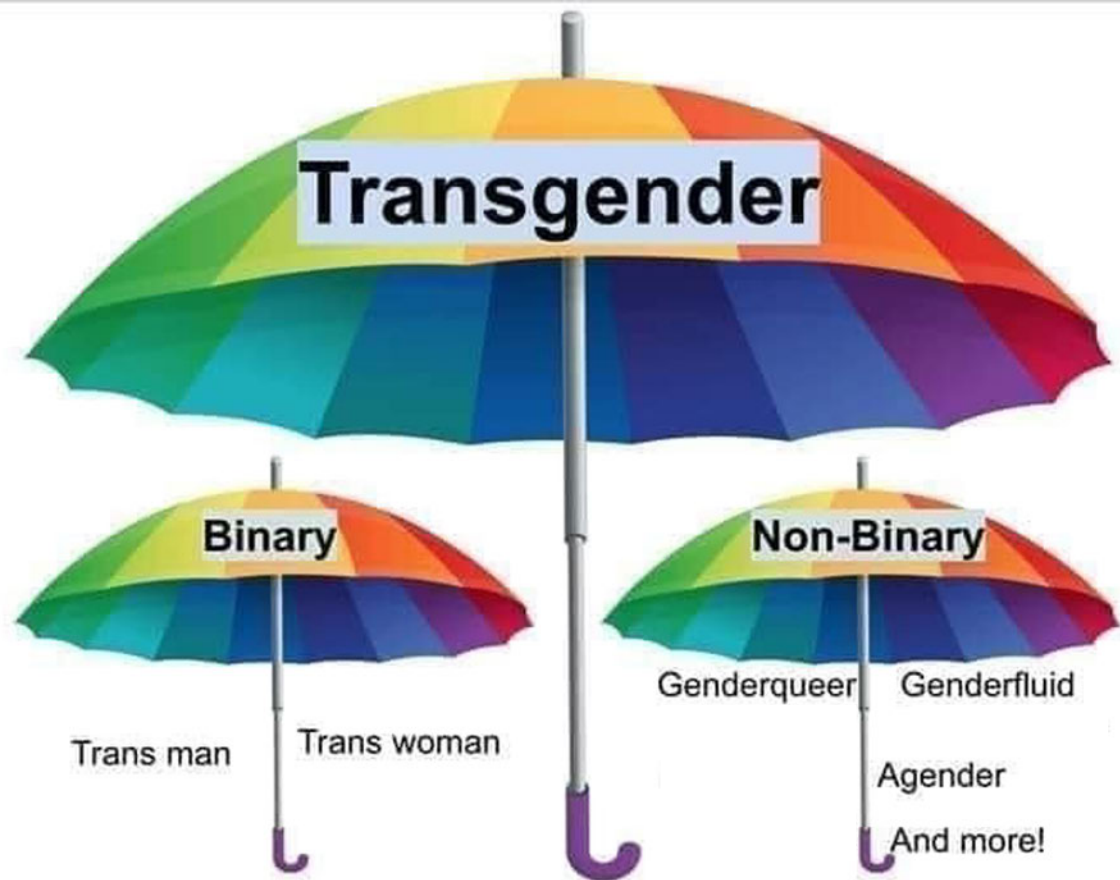
Fluid
Attraction which changes or might change over time

The Bisexual Umbrella

Hetero-, homo-, lesbi-flexible People who are usually attracted to people of a particular gender identity but might occasionally be attracted to people of additional gender identities

Bisexual
Anyone attracted to people of more than one gender.
IT IS NOT TIED TO THE GENDER BINARY!
The two (bi) refers to people of the same & different gender identity as the person feeling the attraction.

Pansexual/Omnisexual
Anyone attracted to people of all genders and sexes or regardless of sex and gender

Hetero-, homo-, lesbi-curious People who are usually attracted to people of a particular gender identity but might be curious about experimenting with people of additional gender identities

Queer
A non-specific identity for describing anyone diverging from heterosexuality, monogomy, or vanilla sexuality.

Which category would you place these terms into?

Gender Expression	Gender Identity		Sexual Orientation	Sex Assigned At Birth
Femme/ Feminine	Trans or Transgender		Bisexual/ Pansexual	Hair Style
Male	Nonbinary		Lesbian/Gay	Intersex
Asexual	Gender Non-Conforming (GNC)		Agender	Anatomy
Two-Spirit			Masc/Masculine	
Cis Gender	Allosexual		Androgynous	Female

Which of these terms are you familiar with?

Gender Expression	Gender Identity	Sexual Orientation	Assigned Sex at Birth
Femme/ Feminine	Gender Non-Conforming (GNC)	Bisexual/ Pansexual	Male
Hair Style			Female
Androgynous	Cis Gender	Lesbian/Gay	Intersex
Masc/Masculine	Two-Spirit	Asexual	
		Allosexual	
	Trans or Transgender		Anatomy
	Nonbinary		
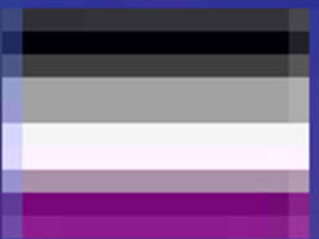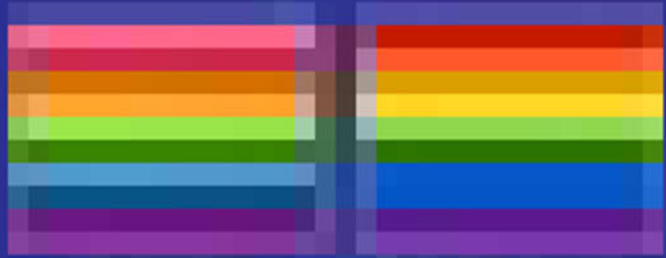
The Two-Spirit Pride Flag
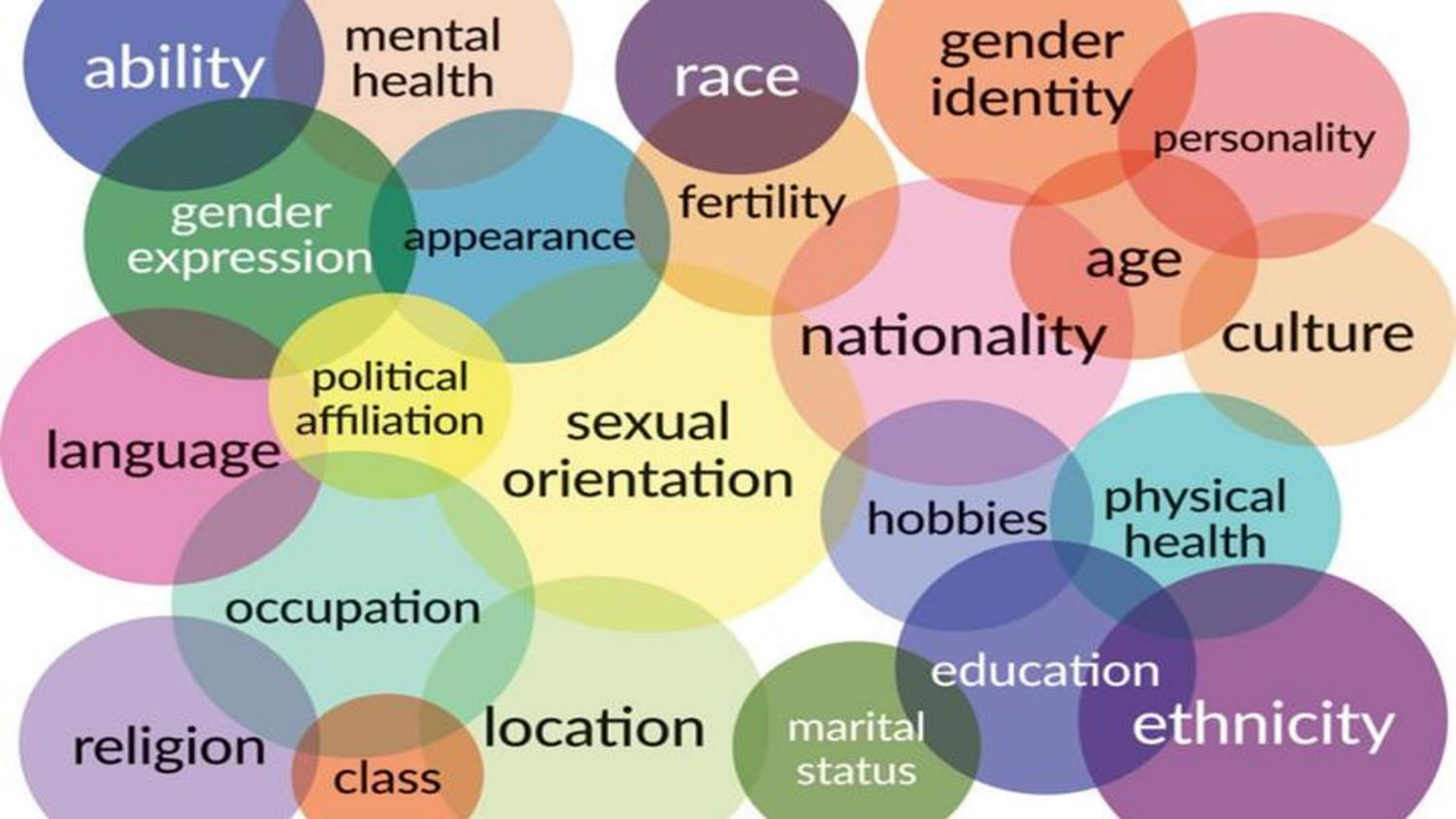
Race/Ethnicity Distribution of
HS Lesbian, Gay, or Bisexual Students
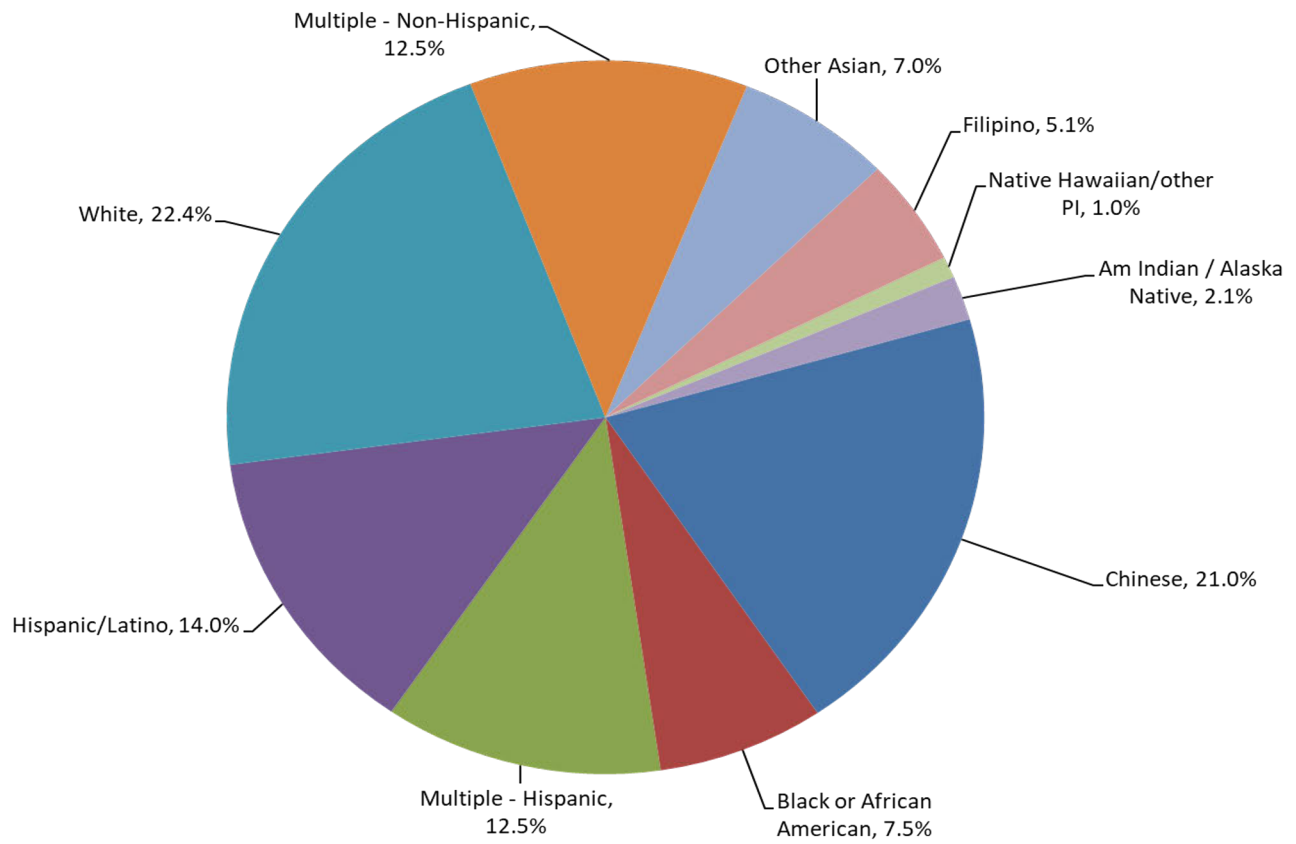
Source: HS YRBS 2017 N=197

HS Sexual Orientation
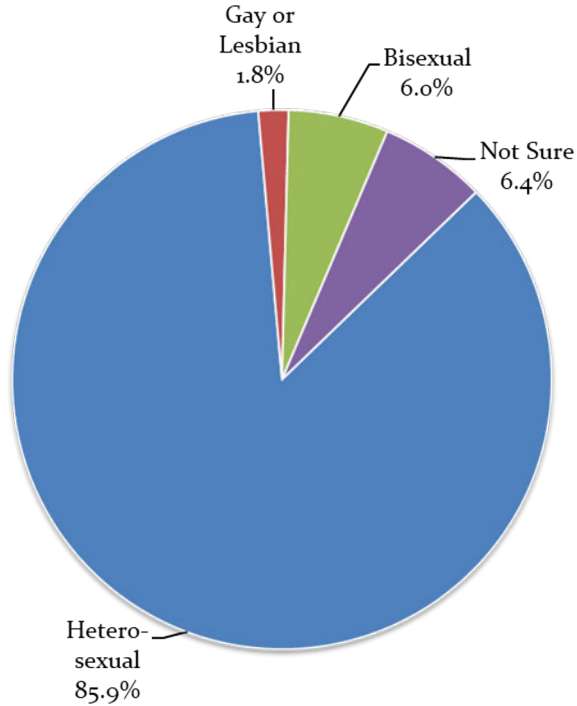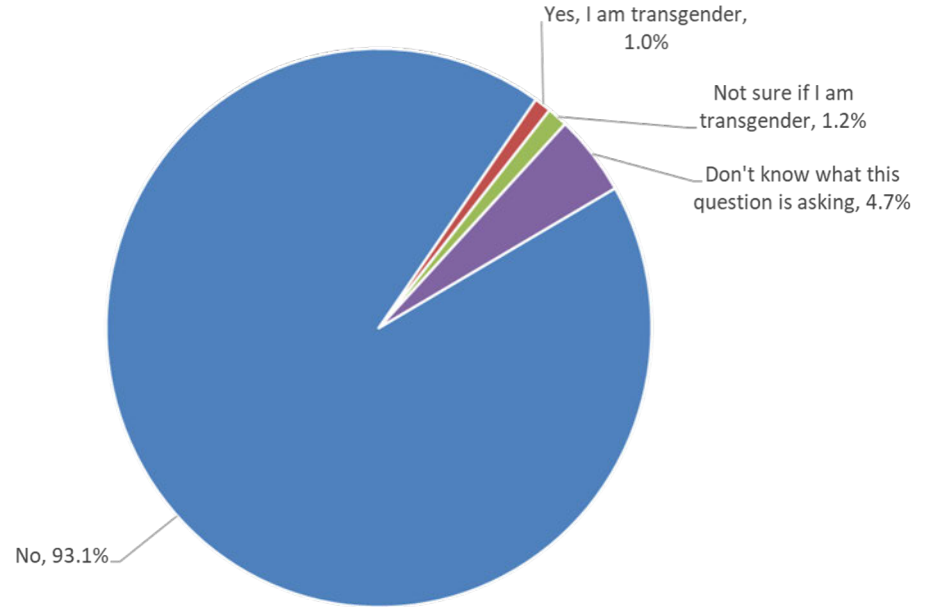
Gay or Lesbian 1.8%

Bisexual 6.0%

Not Sure 6.4%

Hetero-sexual 85.9%

HS Gender Identity

Yes, I am transgender, 1.0%

Not sure if I am transgender, 1.2%

Don't know what this question is asking, 4.7%

No, 93.1%
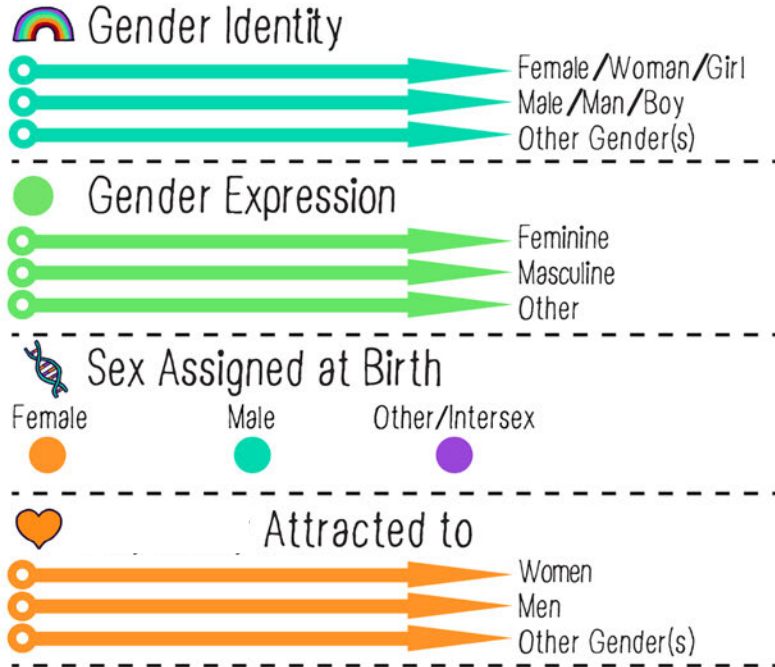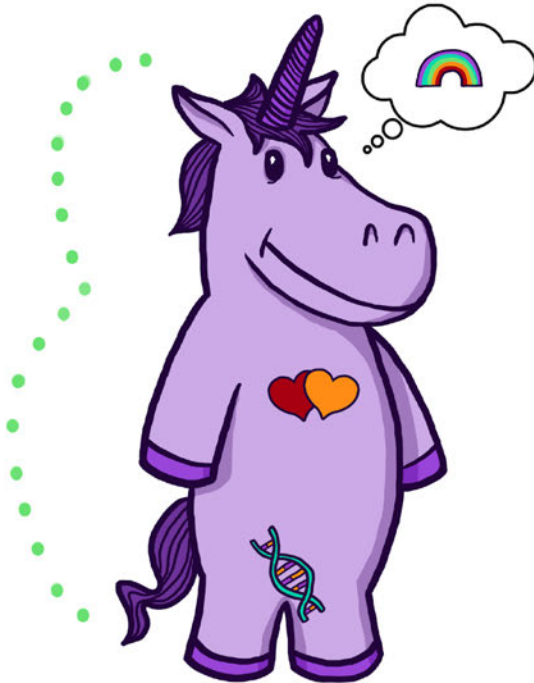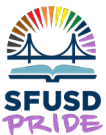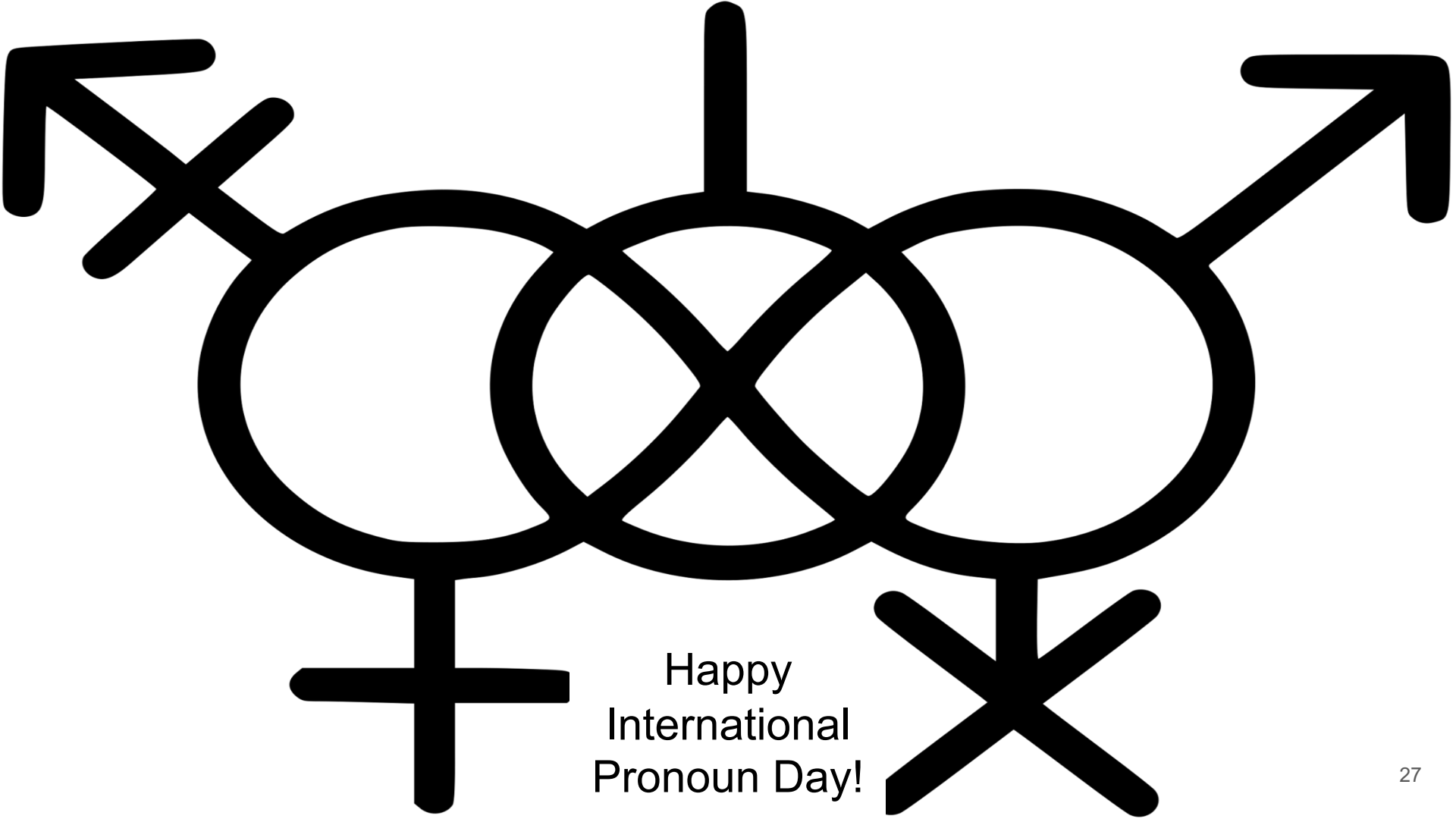
Happy International Pronoun Day!

Teacher's Corner

Why am **I** doing this?

Personal third person pronouns (she/he) have an **implied gender.**

The user is often making an assumption about the gender of another person based on the person's appearance or name. These assumptions aren't always correct, and **the act of making an assumption (even if correct) sends a potentially harmful message** -- that people have to look a certain way to demonstrate the gender that they are or are not.

1

How to Introduce Pronouns to Your Class

Pronouns

Schools have a duty to be places where everyone is respected and valued for who they are. It is only through conscious efforts that our culture and norms can disrupt oppressive practices. Pronouns are linguistic tools that we use to refer to people in the third-person. By being intentional in how we use pronouns, we demonstrate respect for all people, whether transgender, non-binary, gender nonconforming or cisgender.

Below are some examples of commonly used pronouns. Pronouns are always evolving. Never assume you know the pronouns someone uses. Best practice is to offer your pronouns first and then ask the other person what pronouns they would like used for them. Be okay with not receiving an answer. For some people giving an answer could mean outing themselves before they are ready, giving a false response due to stress or concern about how their response could be received, or simply sharing something about them with someone they do not want to.

COMMON PRONOUNS	HOW TO USE PRONOUNS		
[Name]	**[Name]** is funny	I laughed with **[Name]**	The book is not **[Name]'s**
he/him/his	**He** laughed with me.	I laughed with **him.**	That joke is not **his.**
she/her/hers	**She** laughed with me.	I laughed with **her.**	That joke is not **hers.**
they/them/theirs (singular neutral)	**They** laughed with me.	I laughed with **them.**	That joke is not **theirs.**

Teacher Tip
Remind students that it is important to always be respectful in addressing someone and to use the pronouns that person wants used when describing them.

1) *Pronouns can be self-determined based off of an internal sense of gender identity*
2) *Someones pronouns do not have to be fixed and can change over time*
3) *It is our collective job to show mutual respect by using people's correct pronouns*
4) *We are increasingly seeing students using the pronoun 'it'. This is sometimes considered a contentious practice. Please read our guide on how to navigate this.*

Using *they/them* Pronouns

Using the singular *they:*
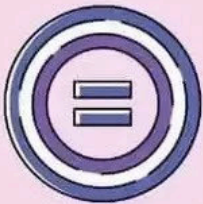
They/them/theirs are pronouns just like she/her/hers and he/him/his!

They/them/their can be used exactly the same as she and he!

Example (she): She walked to the store.

Example (he): He walked to the store.

Example (they): They walked to the store.

Things to remember:

When using they/them/their, you're referring to a singular person!

Grammar rules still work! You would say "they are" instead of "they is" even though you're talking about one person.

It's okay to mess up! Just respect those who correct you, and try to use their preferred pronouns next time!

Example:

Ray is my friend. They are great! I have so much in common with them. They gave me their favorite baseball card. You will meet them soon.

SOURCE: @THE.RAINBOW.SPECTRUM

the Q center
at ACR Health

What about Mr. Mrs. or Ms.?

The gender-neutral pronoun for these circumstances is Mx. ("mix")
Example: That's Mrs. Smith, Mr. Green and Mx. Robinson!

What to do BEFORE handing out the information sheet

Make sure that your students understand what a pronoun is and why they are important. If you aren't comfortable leading that discussion here's some great videos you can use to support students' understanding about pronouns. These can be used as a quick intro *before* passing out the Chosen Name Chosen Name & Personal Pronoun Forms sheet. For many students this is a new concept thus, providing some initial grounding is important.

Elementary

CBC Kids has a great intro to gender vs. sex and sexual expression video and we recommend Welcoming Schools' lesson plan on the Gender Snow Person to help students understand the difference between gender identity, sexual expression, and sexual orientation. Amaze.org has a good one that breaks down pronouns.

This is a great lesson plan from Welcoming Schools and the HRC. Here's another from Gender Inclusive Schools.

Want to keep it local? Here's a wonderful lesson plan and slide show with suggested read alouds we made in house :)

Secondary

This video from As/Is would be a great companion piece to this video from Onlea as it features people talking about their own pronouns and why they are important to them (I'd play it at .5 speed as they talk swiftly). I love this video from MTV UK as it is wonderfully comprehensive and super clear (the speaker does have a British accent, so subtitles may be indicated) to help students understand the difference between gender identity, sexuality, and gender expression.

The Gender Unicorn does a beautiful job breaking down the difference between assigned sex at birth, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual identity. There are also some great definitions to help break all these parts down on this site as well.

Here's a slide show and lesson plan appropriate for both Middle and High school from our LGBTQ Services team. You can even practice using neopronouns with this great tool!

Elementary Name and Pronoun Information Sheet

Name

A. What is your official name?

_____

B. What name would you like me to call you in class?

_____

C. What name would you like me to use with your grown-ups?

_____

Pronouns

Would you like me to call you a boy, a girl, or something else?

What is your favorite way to have fun?

English
= CONFIDENTIAL = INSTRUCTOR EYES ONLY =

1 of 3. NAMES

1. On school record:

2. To call you in class:

3. To use when I contact home:

2 of 3. PRONOUN CHECKLIST

	he/him/his	she/her/hers	they/them/theirs	*(write-in)*
1. In front of class				
2. When contacting home				
3. In front of other teachers				

Would you like a private conversation with the instructor about your pronouns? (*Circle one*)   Yes   No

3 of 3. THREE THINGS ABOUT ME

Tell me three things about yourself. This could be interesting facts, hobbies, or just things you want me to know about you. Use the back of the paper if needed.

1.

2.

3.

Spanish
= CONFIDENCIAL = SOLO PARA MAESTR@ =

1 of 3. NOMBRE

1. ¿Qué nombre está escrito en tus documentos escolares?:	
2. ¿Qué nombre quieres que use en clase?:	
3. ¿Qué nombre debo de usar con tus familiares? :	

2 of 3. PRONOMBRES

	he/him/his (el)	she/her/hers (ella)	they/them/theirs (elle)	*(write-in, escribe otra opción)*
1. Con la clase				
2. Con su familia				
3. Con otros maestr@s				

¿Quiéres tener una conversación privada con tu maestr@ sobre tus pronombres? (*Circula uno*)   Sí   No

3 of 3. TRES COSAS SOBRE TI

Dime tres cosas sobre ti. Podrían ser datos interesantes, pasatiempos o solo cosas que quieres que sepa sobre ti. Puedes usar el otro lado de este papel si quieres. Trata de escribir en Inglés si puedes.

1.

2.

3.

Portuguese
= CONFIDENCIAL = SOMENTE OLHOS DO INSTRUTOR =

1 of 3. NOME

1. Que nome está escrito em seus documentos escolares? Tente escrever em inglês, se possível:	
2. Qual nome você quer que eu use na aula?Tente escrever em inglês, se possível:	
3. Que nome devo usar com seus parentes? Tente escrever em inglês, se possível:	

2 of 3. PRONOMES

	he/him/his (ele)	she/her/hers (ela)	they/them/theirs (eles)	*(write*-in, escreva outra opção*)*
1. Com a classe				
2. Com a sua família				
3. Com outros professores				

Você gostaria de uma conversa privada com o instrutor sobre seus pronomes? (Marque com um círculo)   Sim (Yes)   Não (No)

3 of 3. TRÊS COISAS SOBRE VOCÊ

Diga-me três coisas sobre você. Podem ser fatos interessantes, hobbies ou apenas coisas que você quer que eu saiba sobre você. Use o verso do papel, se necessário Tente escrever em inglês, se possível.

1.

2.

3.

Arabic

= سري = للمعلم فقط =

1 of 3. اسم

1. ما الاسم المكتوب على مستندات مدرستك؟حاول الكتابة بالإنجليزية إن أمكن.	
2. ما الاسم الذي تريدني أن أستخدمه في الفصل؟حاول الكتابة بالإنجليزية إن أمكن:	
3. ما الاسم الذي يجب أن أستخدمه مع أقاربك؟حاول الكتابة بالإنجليزية إن أمكن.	

2 of 3. برونونس

	he/him/his (هو)	she/her/hers (هي)	they/them/theirs (معهم)	(اكتب خيارًا آخر *write-in,*)
1. مع الفصل				
2. مع عائلته				
3. مع مدرسين آخرين				

هل تريد إجراء محادثة خاصة مع معلمك حول الضمائر الخاصة بك؟ (دائرة واحدة   نعم (Yes)   لا (No)

3 of 3. ثلاثة أشياء عنك

أخبرني ثلاثة أشياء عن نفسك. قد تكون حقائق رائعة أو هوايات أو مجرد أشياء تريده أن يعرفها عن نفسك. يمكنك استخدام الجانب الآخر من الورقة إذا أردت. جرب الكتابة بالإنجليزية إن أمكن.

1.

2.

3.

Thai
= เป็นความลับ = สำหรับครูเท่านั้น =

1 of 3. ชื่อ

1. ชื่ออะไรเขียนอยู่บนเอกสารโรงเรียนของคุณ? กรุณาตอบกลับเป็นภาษาอังกฤษถ้าเป็นไปได้:	
2.คุณต้องการให้ฉันใช้ชื่ออะไรในชั้นเรียน กรุณาตอบกลับเป็นภาษาอังกฤษถ้าเป็นไปได้:	
3. ฉันควรใช้ชื่ออะไรกับญาติของคุณ? กรุณาตอบกลับเป็นภาษาอังกฤษถ้าเป็นไปได้ :	

2 of 3. คำสรรพนาม

	he/him/his (เขา)	she/her/hers (เธอ)	they/them/theirs (พวกเขา)	*(write-in, เขียนในตัวเลือกอื่น)*

1. กับคลาส				
2.กับครอบครัวของเขา				
3. กับอาจารย์ท่านอื่นๆ				

คุณต้องการสนทนาส่วนตัวกับครูเกี่ยวกับคำสรรพนามของคุณหรือไม่? (*วงกลมหนึ่ง)*   และมันคือ (Yes)   เลขที่(No)

3 of 3. สามสิ่งที่เกี่ยวกับคุณ

บอกฉันสามสิ่งเกี่ยวกับคุณ อาจเป็นข้อเท็จจริงที่น่าสนใจ งานอดิเรก หรือแค่บางอย่างที่คุณอยากให้ฉันรู้เกี่ยวกับคุณ
คุณสามารถใช้อีกด้านหนึ่งของกระดาษนี้ได้หากต้องการ โปรดลองเขียนเป็นภาษาอังกฤษถ้าเป็นไปได้

1.

2.

3.

Chinese
= 机密的 = 只为老师=

1 of 3. 薯

1.你的学校文件上写的是什么名字？如果
可能，请用英文书写：

2. 你想让我在课堂上使用什么名字？如果可能，请用英文书写：	
3. 我应该给你的家人起什么名字？如果可能，请用英文书写：	

2 of 3. 代词

	he/him/his (他)	she/her/hers (她)	they/them/theirs (他们)	*(write-in, 写在另一个选项中)*
1. 随着班级				
2. 和你的家人				
3. 与其他老师				

您想与老师就您的代词进行私人对话吗？(*圈一个*) 是的 (Yes)   不 (No)

3 of 3. 关于你的三件事

告诉我关于你自己的三件事。这可能是很酷的事实、爱好，或者只是你想让他了解你自己的事情。如果需要，您可以使用本文的另一面。如果可能，请尝试用英语写作。

1.

2.

3.

Filipino/Tagalog
= KUMPidensyal = PARA SA GURO =

1 of 3. PANGALAN

1. Anong pangalan ang nakasulat sa iyong mga dokumento sa paaralan? Subukang sumulat sa Ingles kung maaari:	
2. Anong pangalan ang nais mong gamitin ko sa klase? Subukang sumulat sa Ingles kung maaari:	
3. Anong pangalan ang dapat kong gamitin sa iyong mga kamag-anak? Subukang sumulat sa Ingles kung maaari:	

2 of 3. MGA PANGHALIP

	he/him/his (siya/ang kanyang)	she/her/hers (siya/kanya)	they/them/theirs (sila)	*(write-in, sumulat ng isa pang pagpipilian)*
1. Sa klase				
2. Kasama ang kanyang pamilya				
3. Kasama ang ibang mga guro				

Nais mo bang magkaroon ng isang pribadong pag-uusap sa iyong guro tungkol sa iyong mga panghalip? (*Bilugan ang isa*)   Oo (Yes)   Hindi (No)

3 of 3. TATLONG BAGAY TUNGKOL SA IYO

Sabihin mo sa akin ang tatlong bagay tungkol sa iyong sarili. Maaari itong maging mga cool na katotohanan, libangan, o mga bagay lamang na nais mong malaman niya tungkol sa iyong sarili. Maaari mong gamitin ang iba pang bahagi ng papel na ito kung nais mo. Subukang sumulat sa Ingles kung maaari.

1.

2.

3.

Gender Inclusive Language

Guidance for SFUSD Educators

SFUSD
PRIDE
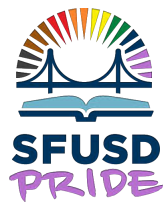
Curriculum & Instruction Division
Student & Family Services Division

Table of Contents

San Francisco Unified School District

Introduction Letter

To All SFUSD staff:

The Graduate Profile, as outlined in Vision 2025, defines SFUSD's work to prepare students to enter the 21st century. The aim is to help students develop their fullest potential, and be ready to lead and work with others. Curriculum, classroom practices, individual supports and equity practices, assist students to reach this goal.

Since 1990, San Francisco Unified School District has worked to create welcoming and affirming schools for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning (LGBTQ+) students and families through LGBTQ Student Services.. The charge of LGBTQ Student Services is to assist all schools to create and sustain school climates where LGBTQ students, families and staff are free to identify and express themselves authentically and safely.

This equity work intersects with the multiple other ways we uplift our students' and families' multifaceted identities including race, culture, class, and ability; it also deepens our collective understanding of gender. Diversities of gender, found in cultures around the world, have been systemically erased and unacknowledged in our histories but that is changing. Student needs, inclusive of gender diversity, identity, and expression are pushing SFUSD to redefine educator practices, student programs and individual support for the 21st century world that they are shaping.

This guide is another step toward fostering inclusive school communities and fulfilling our responsibility to LGBTQ+ and nonbinary students and families, It is not our intention to shift personally held beliefs, but rather to cultivate and clarify educator pedagogy and classroom practices that contribute to safe, welcoming and affirming schools. How we model inclusiveness and respect concretely demonstrates an educator's equity stance and impacts student development and achievement.

We hope that this guidance supports educators to take steps in incorporating gender inclusive practices in their equity stance that will in turn benefit and support students throughout SFUSD.

In community,

Dr. Nicole Priestly, Chief Academic Officer
Curriculum & Instruction Division
Pronouns: she, her, hers

Mele Lau-Smith, Chief
Student & Family Services Division
Pronouns: she, her, hers

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Exploring Common Gender Terms

The following gender terms may be new to you or your school. Below is a brief guide to common gender terms. . These definitions are pulled from SFUSD Administrative Regulation 5145.4 and the LGBTQ Family + Gender Diversity elementary educator guide. The terms and definitions below may slightly vary in other LGBTQ-focused guidance and curricula.

We understand that laguage relating to sex, gender and sexual orientation is fluid, complex and can be sensitive. Students, families and educators may use terms for themselves and definitions that are different from those found here. *Always mirror the language used by LGBTQ+ individuals to refer to themselves and get their consent to use/share specific and personal terms with others.*

If a student is using terms unfamiliar to you, use context clues to figure out what that term means, rather than interrupting a student in the middle of a disclosure. If by the end you're still unsure, simply ask a student "What does that term mean to you?" to demonstrate that each student may relate to terms differently.

- **Assigned Sex at Birth:** This refers to the terms used to categorize primary sex carectoristices (e.g. penis, vulva) based upon their external apperance at birth. Ex: Assigned Female at Birth (AFAB) or assigned male at birth (AMAB).
- **Gender**: Gender is defined as an individual's stated gender identity, this can include binary genders such as man/boy, woman/girl, or nonbinary identities such as agender, nonbinary, or gender queer.
- **Cisgender (cis)**: Cisgender means a person whose gender identity is the same as what is typically associated with their assigned sex at birth.
- **Transgender (trans)**: Transgender means a person whose gender identity is different from that typically associated with the assigned sex at birth. This can be binary (ex: trans man, trans woman), or non-bianary (ex: non-binary, genderfluid, agender). Not all non-binary persons identify as trans, and not all trans people identify as non-binary.
- **Non-Binary**: An umbrella term for genders that fall outside the binary (boy/man, girl/woman). People who identify as non-binary sometimes identify as a mix of binary genders, outside of the gender binary entierly, or a fluid combination of all of the above which is ever changing.
- **Gender Identity**: Gender identity of a person refers to a person's gender-related identity, appearance, or behavior as determined from a person's internal sense of their gender, regardless of if their gender identity, appearance, or behavior is different from that traditionally associated with a person's physiology or assigned sex at birth.
- **Gender Expression**: Gender expression refers to how someone chooses to express their gender, this can be demonstrated through their manner of dress, speach, behavior, this can be aligned with or different from what might be typically expected of a a person's assigned sex at birth or their gender identity.
- **Gender-Nonconforming (GNC)**: Gender non-conforming refers to a person whose

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gender expression differs from stereotypical expectations.

- **Stereotype:** A generalization, usually negative, about persons based on some characteristics. The generalization is then attributed to everyone who may fit into that group.

What is Inclusive Language?

Inclusive language is speaking to or about people (individually or in groups) in a manner that does not use gender-specific words. Avoid using gender-specific words unless you are certain about a person's family structure, identity, or relationship orientation. Instead use words that convey inclusivity of all families, identities, and relationships.

For example:

	INSTEAD OF	**CONSIDER USING**
Families	Mom, Dad	Caregiver(s), Guardian(s), Adult(s), Grown-Up(s)
Identities	Boys, Girls	Everyone, everybody, ya'll, folks, learners, students, they/their, persons, ask for pronouns
Relationships	Boyfriend, Girlfriend	Partner, date, sweetheart,images that normalize a variety of relationship/family formations, significant other

Greeting groups of people can be another place to practice inclusive language. For example:

INSTEAD OF
ladies   gentlemen   ma'am   sir   girls   guys   etc.

CONSIDER USING

"Thanks, **friends**. Have a great night."	"Good morning, **folks**!"	"Hi, **everyone**!"	"Can I get you **all** something?"
		"And for **you**?"	

(adapted from an image created by: qmunity.ca)

Common Pronouns

Pronouns are linguistic tools that we use to refer to people in the third-person. By being conscious of how we use pronouns, we demonstrate respect for all people, whether transgender, non-binary, gender nonconforming, or cisgender. Below are some common examples of pronouns used in schools . Pronouns are always evolving. Never assume you know a person's pronoun.

COMMON PRONOUNS	**HOW TO USE PRONOUNS**		
[Name]	**[Name]** is funny	I laughed with **[Name]**	The book is not **[Name]'s**

he/him/his	**He** joked	I laughed with **him**	That joke is not **his**
she/her/hers	**She** joked	I laughed with **her**	That joke is not **hers**
they/them/theirs (singular neutral)	**They** joked	I laughed with **them**	That joke is not **theirs**

The chart on the previous page is not an exhaustive list of pronouns. Other pronouns, such as ze/hir/hirs, have been documented and used in communities across the globe and, although not as common, might be used by students. Remember, just as a name is a signifier of that individual's identity, someone's pronouns are a deep reflection of who they are.

Honorifics

Some transgender and nonbinary teachers are using the honorific "Mx" (prounounced like "Mix") as a neutral alternative to Mr. and Ms. Read this article from US Today to learn more.

Given the diversity of pronouns in our communities, and the possibility that you will be requested to use any of these to refer to students, the following section lists general inclusive best practices which can be incorporated into your practice with students, families and other staff. Using a student's proper pronouns can lesson their suicide risk by up to 50%.

Always mirror the language used by trans and queer individuals to refer to themselves and get their consent to use/share specific and personal terms with others.

General Usage Guidelines[1]

- Avoid using *he* as a universal pronoun; likewise, avoid using binary alternatives such as *he/she*, *he or she,* or *(s)he.*

- As the editors of the recent editions of the *Chicago Manual of Style* (2017), the *Associated Press Stylebook* (2018), and other style guides affirm, the pronoun *they* is appropriate to use in writing when referring to singular antecedents, including when writing for publication.

- Unless the gender of a singular personal antecedent is otherwise specified, use the gender-neutral singular pronouns *they, them, their,* and *theirs.*

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[1] Recommendations adapted from the National Council of Teachers of English's (NCTE) Statement on Gender and Language

- The *Chicago Manual of Style* affirms that the pronoun *themself* may be used to signal a singular antecedent; that some people may alternatively prefer to use *themselves* to signal a singular antecedent; and that a person's stated preference should be respected.

- *Are* is the present-tense verb for the singular pronoun *they,* just as *are* is the present-tense verb for the singular pronoun *you.*

- When referring to any individual, respect that individual's specific pronoun usage, or lack thereof. (Note: while the singular *they* is the most common nonbinary pronoun, there are others, including but not limited to *ey / em / eirs* and *ze / hir / hirs.*

  See the [University of Minnesota's "Nonbinary Gender Pronouns"](#) declension and usage chart for more)

Some Usage Examples[2]

EXCLUSIONARY (Binary)	INCLUSIVE (all genders)	INCLUSIVE (student with they/them/theirs pronouns)
"Every cast member should know **his or her** lines by Friday."	"Every cast member should know **their** lines by Friday."	"Alex needs to learn **their** lines by Friday."
"Each student should wait until **he/she** is notified of **his/her** test results."	"Each student should wait until **they** are notified of their test results."	"Janani should wait until **they** are notified of their test results."

Recommendations for Working with Students

Regarding Grammar and Usage

- Observe all of the General Usage Guidelines in the previous page when exploring language usage in classrooms, communicating with students, preparing curriculum and materials, designing class activities, and responding to student writing.

- Frame instruction in grammar and usage conventions with ongoing discussion of the inherently dynamic and evolving nature of language, rather than asserting, implicitly

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[2] Examples and recommendations adapted from [NCTE's Statement on Gender and Language](#)

or explicitly, that grammar and usage rules are timeless, universal, or absolute. Language shifts; make that part of the classroom conversation.

- When the gender of a singular antecedent is unknown, allow and encourage students to use the gender-neutral singular pronouns *they, them, their,* and *theirs*, rather than using binary alternatives such as *he/she, he or she,* or *(s)he.*

- Allow students who choose not to refer to themselves with any pronouns to self-describe as they see fit, according to context.

- Note that while a rising number of major print-language authorities such as those noted in the previous page now embrace the use of the singular pronoun *they*, makers of most standardized tests have not yet adopted this policy. Track the treatment of the singular *they* in the standardized tests your students may be taking and apprise students accordingly, contextualizing differences among language authorities in a larger, ongoing discussion of language and usage as dynamic and evolving, not absolute or static.

- There is not as yet sufficient literature regarding how to score psycological tests with transgender, nonbinary, or gender diverse youth. Nor how to navigate instruments that utilize gendered data scales normed usind cisgender individuals. However, the [American Psychological Association does offer best practices](#) when working with these clients. Make sure to be transparent with students about what choices you make both in selecting and scoring their assessments to help prevent harm when they see that parts of their assessments may not reflect their gender identity.

Regarding Classroom and School Culture[3]

- Work to establish and maintain classrooms and school communities where students of all gender and sexual identities feel visible, heard, valued, and protected. This includes:
    - Give students an opportunity to share with you their names and pronouns from the beginning including where they may not be comfortable having their chosen names or true gender markers used. [Here's an example.](#)
    - Avoid putting transgender or nonbinary students in the position to teach you or peers about their identity
    - Developing a school-wide protocol for communicating specified names and pronouns to substitute teachers when a student's name is different from the class roster
    - Interrupting when anyone misgenders or misnames students
    - Creating "teachable moments" when language, slurs, or bullying occur that contribute to hostile learning environments

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[3] Examples and recommendations adapted from [NCTE's Statement on Gender and Language](#)

- ○ Calling attention to gender stereotypes in classroom activities, materials, and language.
- ○ Ensure forms include a non-binary option under gender and inclusve family terms (ex. caregiver 1 and caregiver 2 instead of mother and father)

- Instead of saying "preferred" pronouns say "personal" pronouns.   Pronouns are a powerful way to recognize a student's gender self-determination. They are not a "preference."

- As any student does, [LGBTQ students have a right to privacy](#), which includes the right not to be "outed." It is imperative to respect a student's privacy and keep knowledge of sexual orientation or gender identity confidential. An LGBTQ+ student may or may not feel comfortable or safe having their sexual orientation or gender identity known in all contexts. They also may not use the same pronouns in all contexts, even across your school. Maintain confidentiality, attentiveness, and discretion in communicating with and about the student, and do not disclose a student's gender identity or sexual orientation in any setting without the student's prior and clear consent.

- As early as possible in any given term, give each student a private way to let you know their name and pronouns. This could be as simple as including the following questions on a [basic student information sheet](#) or providing index cards a student can fill out <u>confidentially</u>:
  - ○ "What name would you like me to call you?"
  - ○ "What pronouns would you like me to use?"
  - ○ "Who can I share this name and/or pronoun with (Just this class? With other adults? With caregivers/family? etc.)"

- Like other elements of identity, a student's gender identity may be fluid rather than static, staff should remain open to possible shifts in a student's declared name or pronouns.

- Remember queer and trans identities are **not** restricted to certain groups of folks. Your queer and trans students may hold many marginalized identities including racial, ethnic, neurodivergence, disability, imigration status, or being systems involved.

FAQ: What do you do if you misgender someone?
Honest and sincere mistakes are a normal part of the learning process when using new/different pronouns. Always apologize and immediately use the correct pronoun. Persistent, consistent and/or intentional use of the wrong pronoun is considered a form of bullying and harassment.

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Resources to Explore

Teacher Background

- [Gender Spectrum Overview](#) (Teaching Tolerance)
- [Gender Unicorn](#) (Trans Student Educator Resources)
- [Everyone Uses Singular 'They,' Whether They Realize It Or Not](#) (NPR's Fresh Air)
- [Even A Grammar Geezer Like Me Can Get Used To Gender Neutral Pronouns](#) (NPR's Fresh Air)
- [NCTE Additional Resources on Usage](#)
- [NCTE Additional Resources for Addressing Gender Diversity with Students](#)
- [NCTE List of Advocacy Organizations](#)

Curriculum Tools & Resources

- [LGBTQ Family + Gender Diversity Elementary Teaching Guide](#) (SFUSD)
- [Principles of Gender Inclusive Puberty and Health Education](#) (Gender Spectrum)
- [Gender Inclusive Schools Tool Kit (pg. 31/32, 23/24)](#) (Gender Spectrum)
- [Gender Inclusive Classrooms: Concepts and Lessons](#) (Gender Spectrum)

[SFUSD Inclusive Form/Communication Guidelines - District-Wide](#)

References

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The Chicago Manual of Style. 17th ed., The University of Chicago Press, 2017.
Collins, Cory. "[LGBTQ Best Practices Guide](#)." *Teaching Tolerance,* Fall 2018, pp. 24-26.
"Guidelines for the Gender-Fair Use of Language." NCTE, 2002.
[Nonbinary Gender Pronouns](#) - University of Minnesota

SFUSD Professional Development

Search for more [Health Education and Socio-Emotional Learning training opportunities](#) during th2 2019-2020 school year. LGBTQ Support Services is also available to provide training at your school site. Reach out to [LGBTQ@sfusd.edu](#) for more information.

Additional Support

LGBTQ Student Services, Student & Family Services Division

If you have questions about how to support an LGBTQ student or family, reach out to your school social worker, Wellness Center or LGBTQ Student Services (LGBTQ@sfusd.edu). Also, visit our SFUSD employee webpage for more resources.

Curriculum & Instruction Division

Want to request additional support? Fill out this form and let the central office know what you need.

Appreciations

Special thanks to the following people and groups who contributed to this guide with their writing, editing and feedback:

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SFUSD High School E/LA Department Chairs
Suzy de Blois (she, her, hers)

Neopronouns Explained - Focus on 'it'

'It' as Neopronoun

A few folks have started to use the pronoun 'it' as their personal pronoun claiming that it is a neopronoun. This is a practice that is highly controversial for a number of reasons.

A rough analogy here is the n-word. Not everyone who is a member of the African diaspora is comfortable with the use of the word -- hard r or not whether used by another Black person or not but it definitely becomes a much larger issue when used by a non-Black person. But everyone recognizes it as a word that has very clear rules of use, and very real consequences for misuse as well. While the n-word -- depending upon ending a vs. er -- has this maybe kinda sometimes agreed upon use, 'it' does not.

1) **'It' is not technically a neopronoun.** 'It' has existed within the English language since the Middle Ages. It is actually a simplification from the original 'hit'. Even then, the pronoun was not used to describe any living thing, only objects.
2) **The pronoun 'it' has a long history being used as a slur to dehumanize trans and gender non-conforming folks.** Because of this history it cannot be thought of or considered to be the same as any other pronoun.
3) **When a slur is used, it can cause real harm.** NO MATTER WHO USES IT.
4) **For people who do know the history of 'it's use, it is asking them to be okay using a slur.** Not everyone, whether part of that group or not, may be comfortable with that.
5) **Some people will use the fact that one person they know is okay with being called 'it' as a reason that everyone should be okay with it**, (well xyz, is fine with 'it'), this can allow folks to weaponize one person's choice against others.

Give students the benefit of the doubt, hopefully with a little bit of open dialogue they will understand how their manner of communication can impact others. *Ultimately we support all our student's right to self-determine.* If after additional dialogue this is still how they choose to identity, it's OK.

Things you can do as a trusted adult

One on One Dialogue
If you have students who want to use the pronoun 'it' opening a dialogue with them about the fact that 'it' has a history as a slur and thus some folks might have a negative response. Affirm their right to use whatever pronoun feels right to them and also offer to discuss or connect them to someone else to discuss other neopronouns if they want.   This can give you insight into not only their own understanding of 'it's history and use, but also what they are hoping to communicate by using 'it'. Make sure to frame this conversation as a desire to better understand and affirm their gender identity.

Collective Processing
If the student feels that the best language to reflect who they are is to use 'it/its' pronouns. Dedicating a space (GSA, QGroup, Advisory) to discuss identity formation and identity conveying language could be a way to help both this student and those most likely to be impacted by their use of 'it' come to a space of understanding and mitigate possible avenues of harm. This can likewise build a collective

understanding about what place/time/space considerations could be important around the use of potentially loaded language, reclaimed or not.

Alternative Neopronouns

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	*They* laughed	I called *them*	*Their* eyes gleam	That is *theirs*	They like *themselves*
Ne	*Ne* laughed	I called *nem*	*Nir* eyes gleam	That is *nirs*	Ne likes *nemself*
Ve	*Ve* laughed	I called *ver*	*Vis* eyes gleam	That is *vis*	Ve likes *verself*
Spivak	*Ey* laughed	I called *em*	*Eir* eyes gleam	That is *eirs*	Ey likes *emself*
Ze/Zie and Hir	*Ze* laughed	I called *hir*	*Hir* eyes gleam	That is *hirs*	Ze likes *hirself*
Ze/Zie and Zir	*Ze* laughed	I called *zir*	*Zir* eyes gleam	That is *zirs*	Ze likes *zirself*
Xe	*Xe* laughed	I called *xem*	*Xyr* eyes gleam	That is *xyrs*	Xe likes *xemself*

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 feel put 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

Adopted from UNC Greenboro

How Slurs Change Over Time

6) **Some terms can only be used by in group members.** Many words that started out as slurs have been reclaimed by members of those communities (ex: transv****te & queer). When a marginalized group begins to reclaim a term it is a political act.
    Note: Not everyone in these groups may agree that these are terms that can or should be reclaimed. If someone not part of that group uses these words it is akin to them using a slur or hate speech against these groups.
    a) How slurs get reclaimed:
        i) A small number of folks collectively agree to begin using the slur in this new way, typically only with other members of that group.

<ol type="i" start="2">
These words become a way of signaling in-group belonging for more people of that identity, however for most it continues to be a slur.
As wider acceptance is gained, more members of the community become comfortable with its use inside of their community. An active movement against the words use by others grows.
Other groups may begin to use the word for themselves, however often this is seen as controversial and disrespectful.
A balance may be found where the word can be used informally by folks of many identities, however for some it will always have the same violent impact. Caution and care will dictate its use.

Slur Reclamation Spectrum

'It	'That's Gay'	'T-word'	'N-word (a ending only)'		'Queer'
It's only just begun		In Group Only			Mostly okay erry day
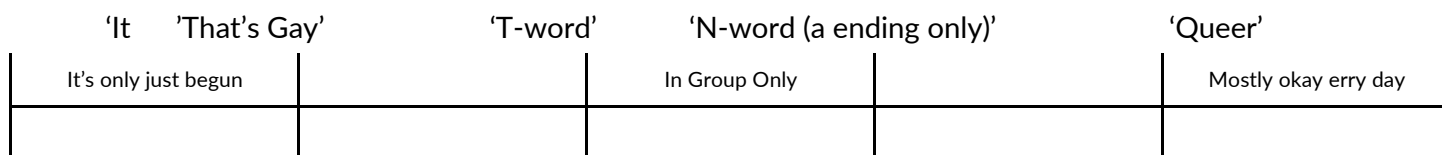
Michael Harriot offered a way to frame the use of such language and how to communicate as an outgroup person to someone who is a member of the in-group about using reclaimed slurs in this except of his column the [Clapback Mailbag](#) quoted below:

From: Adam
To: The Root

Hello,

Let me start by saying how much I love your site. I think that the journalism that you put forward is some of the most insightful and necessary writing about the intersection of race, politics, gender, sport and culture that I've had the good fortune of reading. Not that my opinion draws a whole lot of water in the world, but I figured you'd at least like to know how much of a fan I am. I appreciate the anger, the eloquence, and (maybe above all) the humor that you put into every piece.

The purpose for my email is that I've found myself in an awkward situation at work lately, and I don't have the right sounding board available to me to give me the kind of guidance that I need in this particular situation. Before I get into the specifics, some context: I am white (you could probably tell by the number of consonants in my last name, those z's are a pretty big tip). I am also a teacher. I teach 7th and 8th grade English language Arts at a middle school. The town I live and teach in is fairly small (by national standards) and very white. Approximately 90% white, 4% Hispanic, less than 2% African American, and a smattering of other non-white residents.

My classes, and the school system as a whole, generally follows suit, and while this area is relatively progressive in terms of politics, there are some instances of the kind of blatant, ignorant racism that you see in semi-rural New England. Namely, oversized blue lives matter flags flying behind beat-up pickups, and the occasional confederate flag displayed prominently in a conspicuously open garage...

This situation isn't really about larger issues though, it's about one young man in one of my classes. I'm going to call him B. B is one of only a handful of black students in his grade. He's a very smart kid, although he has a habit of slacking off in classes. He's had some problems in the past which have garnered him a reputation among teachers and administrators as a "trouble" kid. He also happens to be bigger than most of his classmates, and louder, and when you combine that with the racial demographics of the school, it's pretty easy to see why he's noticed.

Some of the things that he's gotten in trouble for are the things that most 13 and 14 year old boys get in trouble for. Not doing their homework, acting like asses in classrooms, talking back to teachers, etc. He's not unique in those regards. I have found that most teenagers, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status have a remarkable shared ability to be assholes from time to time. This isn't about that. This is about B using the n-word.

I'm perceptive enough that I recognize the difference between an "a" and an "er," and I also understand that context is important. B is definitely using the former, primarily with his friends, some of whom are black, and some of whom are not. I recognize that I don't have any right to tell B what sort of language he can use in his life outside of school, and in the specific case of that particular word, I'm white, I don't have any right to tell any black man or woman to not say it. The issue isn't with B using the n-word with his friends, it's with him using it in school. Several of my colleagues who, as you may have guessed, are also white and tend more towards the older side of middle-aged, have complained about B's use of the n-word. Usually it revolves around him using it loudly in the cafeteria and in the lunchroom. Ordinarily, I would ignore these complaints as more of the same from the fossilized side of the school.

B's behavior has driven me nuts from time to time, but for the most part I've found him to be a pretty stand-up kid. As long as you're straight with him, he's straight with you, and if you call him out for something he's doing, he's big enough to take responsibility for his actions (again, for the most part, It has to be remembered that he's 14). However, I feel like the use of the n-word is different somehow. One of the complaints that I've heard is that there is a group of white kids who are now starting to use the n-word amongst themselves, and making the argument that if B and his friends are using it, then it's ok, and they can use it too. I haven't personally heard this, so it may be more complaints from the fossils, as they tend to pin the blame on B for this situation, but I'm also aware of the particular racially charged history of the school system, and I'm mindful of the incident from a few years ago.

No amount of teacher and administrator vigilance, and anti-bias training is going to change the fact that some kids' parents may have confederate flags in their garages, and it's not that much of difference in pronunciation between an "a" and an "er," but it's a whole different world of connotation. So I'm in a weird place. I feel like I have a pretty good relationship with B, so I want to say something to him about it, but I don't want to take away any of his agency. Also, I want to say some other, rather loud and direct things to this other group of kids, but I don't actually have any proof that they're saying it beyond the complaints of a group of older colleagues, some of whom may have their own dubious tastes in garage decoration.

The final thing is, honestly, hearing B use the n-word as much as he does makes me uncomfortable. Not the word itself, or him saying it, just the fact that he seems to use it without regard for his own personal context (maybe that's my own unconscious bias poking through). In a perfect world, this is where I'd turn to my black colleagues and ask their advice, but the truth is, I don't have any. I also don't have any black friends close enough (either geographically or relationship-wise) that I feel comfortable asking. So I figured that I would ask you, journalists whose writing, thoughtfulness, and ruthless devotion to the telling the truth I admire. If I am

completely out of line and deserve to be clowned for this, please, clown away. If you would like to share this with any other members of your staff for their input please feel free. I've used my real name because this is a real situation, and I think that it's important not to hide behind a pseudonym. I recognize that you are all extremely busy, and if I never receive a response I won't hold a grudge, and will happily remain a devoted fan of The Root.

Thank you for your time, and I wish you all the best in 2019.

Sincerely,

Adam

P.S - Raisins in potato salad should be considered an act of war.

Dear Adam,

I am sure the people in the comment sections will have some thoughts about how you should handle this. As a father and a longtime black person, I have always approached the subject of race by simply explaining my perspective in an adult manner, not filtering it as if they were too stupid to understand.

I would tell B this:

Hey B,

I like you, B. I think you're a pretty smart kid. Not good-grade-in-social-studies smart. But SMART, smart. So for the next few minutes, you're not a student and I'm not a teacher. We're just two people talking to each other. After we're finished, you'll go back to being a student and I'll go back to being a teacher.

I've noticed that you use the n-word a lot and it makes me uncomfortable. I couldn't explain the history of that word to you from my perspective. As a white man, I can't even say the word should be off limits to you. I know you probably don't think that word is a bad word and I can't say that it is. But I'd like for you to look at the n-word as a knife.

Knives aren't bad. You can use a knife to cut steak and to spread butter. Some people even use them for fun. But you can't bring a knife to school, B. If they catch you with a knife, you will get in trouble and here's why:

If you can bring a knife, then everyone could bring a knife. More importantly, no one knows what you or the other knife carriers will do with the knife. One of those people might use their knife to hurt someone. They might even use it to hurt you.

B, the n-word is a knife.

I can't tell you not to ever use the n-word knife. I'm just asking that you don't bring it to school. When you pull it out, your intention might be to put a little butter on your bread but when you wave it around, it makes some people feel uncomfortable.

And B, one of your white friends are gonna see you using the knife and figure, "If B can carry a knife, so can I." But someone will definitely use it to hurt someone. Like I said, I know white people.

So think about what I said. If you don't care, then I understand. I just wanted you to know how I felt because I like you.

And I think you're smart.

I guarantee that B will think about what you said. I can't promise that he'll change, but you will have made an impact.