



Tips for Using Pronouns

Grinnell College

Why We Share Our Pronouns

At Grinnell College, we're always working to include and engage everyone. One way you can do this is to share your pronouns, or the words you want to be called when people aren't using your name. Like names, pronouns are an important part of how we identify that deserves to be respected. And we recognize that assuming someone's gender can be hurtful, especially to members of our community who are transgender, genderqueer, or non-binary.

As a community, we are all learning together about the importance of pronouns and being better allies to the trans community on campus. We hope that you'll join us in striving for inclusion, justice and respect—because at Grinnell, we welcome all.

Types of Pronouns

He, him, his: can indicate that the subject is male.

- Tyler said he is going to the dining hall for brunch.
- Andrew told me that his favorite class was history.
- We shouldn't go to the meeting without him.

She, her, hers: can indicate that the subject is female.

- Monica called me to say that she is signing up for the activist group.
- Sarah left her bag at home.
- That pen is hers.

They, them, theirs: does not indicate the subject's gender. Functions as both a singular and plural pronoun.

- Taylor doesn't want to go to the movie because they think it'll be scary.
- Carl is studying abroad soon. I'm so excited for them!
- Tonight I'm going to their performance.

Ze, hir, hers: does not indicate the subject's gender. Pronounced zee, here and heres.

- Ze is meeting us before we walk to Campus Safety.
- I heard hir singing at the Open Mic.
- I think that burrito is hers.

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Co, co, cos: does not indicate the subject's gender. Pronounced coh.

- Jesse is going to be my roommate. Co is bringing a mini-fridge.
- Did you wish co a "happy birthday" yet?
- I just got back from co's room in the residence hall.

Per, per, pers: does not indicate the subject's gender. Pronounced as it looks.

- Per is going to Des Moines for the weekend.
- We asked per to be the officiant at our wedding after the recent SCOTUS decision.
- I left my phone in per room.

Having Conversations

Starting a dialogue about the importance of pronouns can be informative and powerful. Here are a few quick, one-sentence explanations you can use to explain why it's important to share pronouns!

- I share mine because I don't want anyone to feel unsafe or unwelcome and I think this helps.
- I think that sharing my pronouns helps everyone feel included and respected.
- If we only asked trans people to share them, it would be weird.
- Sharing my pronouns helps make my workspace more welcoming to people of all genders.
- I want to make sure that everyone gets my name and pronouns right every time.
- I want to make sure I get everyone else's name and pronouns right, too!
- Hooray! I've been waiting all day for someone to ask! I share my pronouns because I think it will change the world.
- I think it's more respectful not to assume someone's gender based on how I think they look. I'm sharing mine so that you won't have to assume either!
- I share mine because I am an active ally.
- I share mine because I am so proud to be trans, and having the chance to share my pronouns at work is phenomenal!
- I really appreciate that you asked! I share them because I think this helps to create a more positive environment for everyone that lives, works, visits and learns here at Grinnell College.
- Oh, I share my pronouns so that people have the chance to remember that assumptions about gender hurt us all.
- Because I always want to fight prejudice against transgender, genderqueer, and non-binary people whenever and wherever I can.
- I believe in radical acceptance and unconditional love.

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