

Formal English for Professionals

Using Gender-Neutral Language

- Corinne V.

A rental contract...

The lessor shall bind himself to:

- Repair or replace any domestic appliances which break down during the term of lease;
- Ensure that utility bills are paid within two (2) weeks of collection of money from the lessee;

...

The lessee shall bind himself to:

- Take good care of all movable and immovable properties;
- Pay the lessor the money due for utility bills within one (1) week of notice from the lessor;

...

A phone-call...

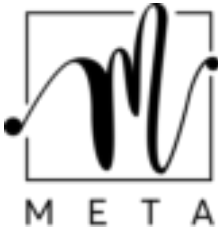
Receptionist – Good morning, Smith & Black Associates, how may I help you?

Ms Drake – Hi, good morning. I would like to make an appointment with Dr. Smith, please. He comes highly recommended!

Receptionist – Yes, of course, but Dr. Smith is a she not a he...

Ms Drake – Oh, I'm so sorry! I just assumed...





Strategy #1 – Job titles

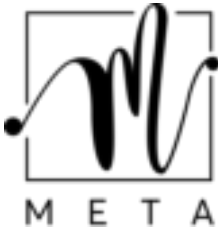
Many job titles have been revised so as to be gender-neutral. So ‘policeman’ is now ‘police officer’, ‘juryman’ is ‘juror’ and ‘headmaster’ is ‘principal’.

Match the **gender-neutral** titles on the right with the more **traditional terms** on the left.

1. Airhostess
2. Craftsman
3. Foreman
4. Freshman
5. Spokesman
6. Statesman

- a) First-year student
- b) Supervisor
- c) Political leader
- d) Artisan
- e) Flight attendant
- f) Representative

Strategy #2 – General terms



Mankind (N)	Man-made (Adj)	Manpower (N)	The common man (N)
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The average person

**Workforce/
Personnel**

**Humankind/
Humanity**

**Synthetic/
Manufactured**

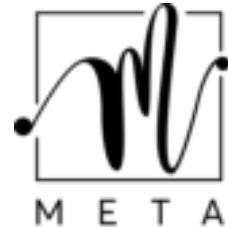
Strategy #3 - They

they *pronoun*

BrE /ðeɪ/

AmE /ðeɪ/

used as a subject of a verb



Used instead of *he* or *she* to refer to a person whose sex is unknown, not mentioned or unimportant

- ***If anyone arrives late they'll have to wait outside.***

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they *pronoun*

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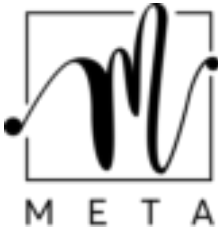
used as a subject of a verb

Used instead of *he* or *she* to refer to a person whose sex is unknown, not mentioned or unimportant

- ***If anyone arrives late they'll have to wait outside.***

**Used after 'everybody/one', 'anybody/one',
'nobody/ one' & 'somebody/one'.**

Strategy #4 – Pluralise



By **PLURALISING**, you sidestep the issue!

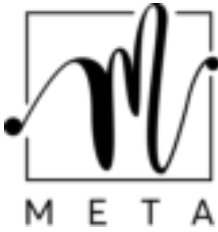
Instead of:

A teacher must be prepared for any questions **his/ her** students may ask **him/ her**.

Use:

***Teachers** must be prepared for any questions **their** students may ask **them**.*

Strategy #4 – Use the infinitive form



Using the **infinitive** form **with 'to'**

Instead of:

The teacher agrees **he/ she** will give the best education to the children in the class

Use:

*The teacher agrees **to give** the best education to the children in the class.*

Practice – Job titles



Traditional Titles

1. **Businessman**
2. **Workman**
3. **Salesman**
4. **Fireman**
5. **Chairman**

Gender-Neutral Titles

- a) **Chair**
- b) **Fire fighter**
- c) **Business executive**
- d) **Sales person**
- e) **Worker**



Practice - Make any necessary changes to the underlined sections in order to maintain gender-neutral language.



Write your answers here:

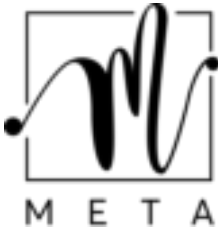
1. Upon termination of the agreement, the freelancer agrees that he/she will return to the company any confidential paperwork.
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2. A headmaster should meet his responsibility towards all the children in his school and be fair apart from strict.
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3. The layman tends to find legalese difficult to understand.
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Image references



- Contract Image: <https://unsplash.com/photos/GJao3ZTX9gU>
- On the phone Image: <https://unsplash.com/photos/V4CU30BsrEk>
- Forearms Image: <https://unsplash.com/photos/Y5bvRlcCx8k>
- Workers Image: <https://unsplash.com/photos/tZw3fcjUIpM>
- Thank you Image: <https://pixabay.com/photos/thank-you-feedback-letters-5077738/>