

2. "Man" as a prefix  
Sexist: mankind, manpower, man-hours, man-made, manholes  
Non-sexist: humanity, human power, work hours, artificial, utility covers

3. "Man" as suffix  
Sexist: Chairman, spokesman, salesman  
Non-sexist: Chair/presider, spokesperson/salesperson

4. "Man" as people  
Sexist: Englishmen, Frenchmen  
Non-sexist: The English, The French

5. "Man" as public servant  
Sexist: congressman, lady senator  
Non-sexist: legislator/representative, senator

#### d. Use pronouns correctly.

A pronoun is used to replace a noun or another pronoun. First and second person pronouns are genderless (I, we, me, you, our, your, yours etc.) but third person causes sexist difficulties.

1. Use plural nouns/ pronouns  
Sexist: A child should learn to tie his own shoes.  
Non-sexist: Children should learn to tie their own shoes.

2. Omit the pronoun  
Sexist: A politician likes to offer his opinion.  
Non-sexist: A politician likes to offer opinion.

3. Change the subject.  
Sexist: A lawyer who wants to win his case will do his homework.  
Non-sexist: Homework is important to the lawyer who wants to win a case.

4. Use the passive voice  
Sexist: The gardener uses his tools in his works.  
Nonsexist: The gardener's work is accomplished with the use of tools.

#### e. Avoid sexism by endings and implications.

Use neutral words. Sex should not be used as a basis to differentiate between two qualified people. Many Americans have the habit of making two forms of nouns-masculine and feminine- when only one is required.

| <u>Sexist</u> | <u>Non sexist</u> |
|---------------|-------------------|
| usherette     | attendant         |
| janitor       | sanitary engineer |

#### f. Define women by who they are, not by who their fathers are.

Don't use "Mrs. Wil Mendoza", use woman's first name instead: "Mrs. Eva Mendoza"  
Sexist: Mr. and Mrs. Leopoldo Perez  
Nonsexist: Leopoldo and Erlinda Perez

Sexist: Nancy, the wife of George, is our speaker.  
Nonsexist: Nancy, married to George, is our speaker.

#### Reference:

*Gender-Language: A Primer.* University Center for Women's Studies, UP Diliman, Quezon City, 1998

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# Use of Gender Fair Language



## Sexism in Language

### What is Sexism in Language?

The University Center for Women's Studies-University of the Philippines defines Sexism in Language as the use of language which devalues members of one sex, almost invariably women, and thus fosters gender inequality.

It discriminates against women by rendering them invisible or trivializing them at the same time that it perpetuates notions of male supremacy.

### Why the concerns about mere words?

- **Language articulates consciousness**

It not only orders our thought but from infancy, we learn to use language to give utterance to our basic needs and feelings.

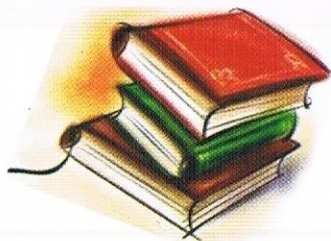
- **Language reflects culture**

It encodes and transmits cultural meanings and values in our society.

- **Language affects socialization**

Children learning a language absorb the cultural assumptions and biases underlying language use and see these as an index to their society's values and attitudes.

Social inequity reflected in language can thus powerfully affect a child's later behavior and beliefs.



## How to avoid sexist language

Here are some guidelines for the use of Gender-Fair Language.

### a. Avoid attaching sexist terms when the gender is unknown

When the gender is unknown, there is no reason to attach a supposed gender. If we are talking about a doctor, whose identity is not given, do not assume the doctor is he.

### b. Avoid Sexism

Sexism is introduced to base words by using suffixes. Adding *ess* or *ette* onto an otherwise neutral noun indicates a feminine adjustment to a masculine word and therefore should be avoided in non sexist language (e.g. *usherette*, *directress*).

### c. Avoid Demeaning Words

Some words demean like "chick" to refer to woman and "cat" to refer to man.

### d. Avoid Stereotyping

Stereotyping means "an unvarying form of patterns: a fixed or conventional notion or conception, as of a person group, idea etc., held by a number of people and allowing for no individuality". This develops through time: males perceive themselves as tough, powerful, strong while women perceive themselves as weak, submissive, passive (e.g. secretary is always perceived to be a woman while a bank president is often perceived as man).

### e. Avoid Verbal Abuse

Words can be used as weapons or healers depending on the choice of verbiage and the manner in which they are spoken. Words like cry baby or mama's boy are often used with the intent to hurt. Women are described as "witches", "bitchy", "catty" or "spiteful". The verbally abusive man is often described as demanding, controlling, bossy, domineering.

## What to do to become a non-sexist speaker or writer:

### a. Man does not involve women

Avoid using man to refer to human being.

Sexist: Man was created by God to inhabit the earth.

Non-sexist: Humans were created....

### b. Avoid describing women's appearance in terms of their sexuality or femininity unless the same can be applied for men in the same situation

When describing women, select detail carefully and honestly, asking "would the other sex be so described?"

### c. Use "man" correctly

1. "Man" as a verb. Substitute with work, serve, operate staff, and run.

Sexist: We are going to man the booth.

Non-sexist: We are going to supervise/ watch the booth.