

Gender-sensitive Communication

Do not use 'man' as the neutral term

The term man is sometimes used to describe the experience of all human beings.

However this practice ignores the experience of women as equal members of the human race and contributes to their omission from public life. It can have a real impact on their lives, for example if the word 'man' is used throughout a job advert a woman may be less likely to apply.

You should not use 'man' to refer to the experiences of all people.

Example

Gender-discriminatory language

Under the law, all men are equal.

Gender-neutral language

Under the law, all people are equal.

Gender-sensitive language

Under the law, all women and men are equal.

Tip: When writing about the history of human achievement it is very important not to use the male as generic, otherwise it would seem that all major advances have been made by men and women have not contributed anything to humanity's progress.

Example

Gender-insensitive language

Gender-insensitive language

Fire is man's greatest invention.

Gender-neutral language

Fire is humanity's greatest invention.

'Man' is cast as generic in several stock expressions; try rewording them to make them applicable to all people.

Gender-insensitive language	Better language
Man in the street	Average person
Every man for himself	Everyone for themselves
Mankind	Humankind
To a man	Every person

See [Practical Tools](#) for examples of situations where women may be subject to invisibility or omission, as well as alternatives you can use →