

Gender-sensitive Communication

Gendering in-animate objects

Assigning a gender to an inanimate object by using gendered pronouns to discuss it applies cultural connotations to characteristics. These connotations are related to gender stereotypes and help to perpetuate them.

You should use the pronoun it to talk about inanimate objects.

Examples

Gender-insensitive language

The ship slipped her moorings.

Gender-sensitive language

The ship slipped its moorings.

Gender-insensitive language

Delegates are free to make presentations in their mother tongues and translations will be provided.

Gender-sensitive language

Delegates are free to make presentations in their native languages and translations will be provided.

Gender-insensitive language

Last month, France and her citizens woke up to snowfall.

Gender-sensitive language

Last month, France and its citizens woke up to snowfall.

Tip: When personifying inanimate objects (i.e. for a cartoon story) think: what objects have been given a gender and is this based on stereotypes? It is also important to include both male and female characters rather than treating the male as neutral.



FamVeld, All aboard our gender-neutral ship!, Shutterstock