

THE ARTICLE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2102/210219-gender-neutral-language.html>

Staff at the Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra have been requested to avoid the use of certain words related to gender. ANU's Gender Institute issued a list of replacement terms for everyday words like 'mother' and 'father'. The switch in vocabulary is part of an initiative to encourage more gender-neutral language. Staff are being asked to use the term 'gestational parent' instead of 'mother,' and 'non-birthing parent' in place of 'father'. The institute's gender handbook claims the words 'mother' and 'father' exclude non-binary people. These are people who identify as being neither male nor female. Non-binary people feel unrepresented in society because of words that refer to males and females.

The gender handbook explains the suggested nomenclature guidelines. It says: "While many students will identify as 'mothers' or 'fathers,' using these terms alone to describe parenthood excludes those who do not identify with gender-binaries." It added: "This non-gendered language is particularly important in...discussions of childbirth and parenthood." An ANU spokesperson said the handbook was just a guide. It said: "This document is not an official ANU policy....It is a guide developed by expert researchers to assist anyone committed to enhancing inclusiveness and diversity." Last week, a UK university asked its staff to substitute the word 'chestfeeding' for 'breastfeeding'.

Sources: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/university-staff-told-stop-saying-23507643>
<https://au.news.yahoo.com/university-asks-staff-to-refer-to-it-as-chest-feeding-100937936.html>
<https://www.foxnews.com/world/university-handbook-encourages-staff-to-adopt-gender-neutral-language>

WARM-UPS

1. GENDER-NEUTRAL LANGUAGE: Students walk around the class and talk to other students about gender-neutral language. Change partners often and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, talk about these topics or words from the article. What will the article say about them? What can you say about these words and your life?

staff / gender / list / replacement / vocabulary / gender-neutral / language / society / handbook / guidelines / parenthood / important / document / policy / diversity / word

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. VOCABULARY: Students A **strongly** believe vocabulary should never change; Students B **strongly** believe it should. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

4. LANGUAGE: How does English compare with your language? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners often and share what you wrote.

	English	My Language
Gender-neutrality		
Bad language		
Grammar		
Pronunciation		
Polite language		
Spelling		

5. GENDER: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "gender". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

6. ENGLISH: Rank these with your partner. Put the most useful things to learn about English at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Gender-neutrality
- Slang
- Bad language
- Poetry
- Spelling
- Text messaging
- Polite language
- Hip-hop

VOCABULARY MATCHING

Paragraph 1

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1. avoid | a. A word or phrase used to describe a thing or to express a concept. |
| 2. replacement | b. Related to the process of carrying or being carried in the womb between conception and birth. |
| 3. initiative | c. Keep away from or stop oneself from doing something. |
| 4. term | d. Not relating to, composed of, or involving just two things. |
| 5. gestational | e. The action or process of changing someone or something with another person or thing. |
| 6. birthing | f. An act or strategy intended to resolve a difficulty or improve a situation. |
| 7. non-binary | g. The action or process of giving birth. |

Paragraph 2

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| 8. nomenclature | h. A person or thing acting or serving in place of another. |
| 9. excludes | i. The word or words applied to someone or something. |
| 10. identify | j. Denies someone access to or stop someone from going to or being at a place, group, or somewhere in society. |
| 11. committed | k. Intensifying, increasing, or further improving the quality, value, or extent of. |
| 12. enhancing | l. Wholeheartedly dedicated. |
| 13. inclusiveness | m. Establish or show who or what someone or something is. |
| 14. substitute | n. The quality of including all sections of society. |

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2102/210219-gender-neutral-language.html>

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- a. Staff at a university in Australia can no longer use gender-related words. **T / F**
- b. A gender institute wants people to say 'mum' and not 'mother'. **T / F**
- c. The institute wants staff to say 'non-birthing parent' instead of 'father'. **T / F**
- d. The institute says gender words make non-binary people feel excluded. **T / F**
- e. The institute said students do not identify as mothers or fathers. **T / F**
- f. A spokesperson said gender-related language was now university policy. **T / F**
- g. The institute's guide is to help people enhance diversity. **T / F**
- h. A UK university wants to introduce a new word - 'chestfeeding'. **T / F**

2. SYNONYM MATCH:

Match the following synonyms. The words in **bold** are from the news article.

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| 1. avoid | a. illustrate |
| 2. certain | b. word |
| 3. switch | c. manual |
| 4. term | d. change |
| 5. claim | e. variety |
| 6. handbook | f. shun |
| 7. describe | g. help |
| 8. particularly | h. assert |
| 9. assist | i. particular |
| 10. diversity | j. especially |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. avoid the use of | a. handbook |
| 2. replacement terms | b. to substitute the word |
| 3. part of an initiative to | c. certain words |
| 4. Non-binary people feel unrepresented | d. and diversity |
| 5. words that refer | e. in society |
| 6. The gender | f. encourage more |
| 7. particularly important in discussions | g. by expert researchers |
| 8. It is a guide developed | h. to males and females |
| 9. enhancing inclusiveness | i. of childbirth |
| 10. a UK university asked its staff | j. for everyday words |

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2102/210219-gender-neutral-language.html>

1. In what city is the university in the article?
2. What is the name of the university institution that issued guidelines?
3. What term is being recommended in place of 'mother'?
4. What term is being recommended in place of 'father'?
5. Who does the article say may feel unrepresented?
6. What does a handbook say students may identify as?
7. What does the handbook say non-gendered language is important in?
8. What did an ANU spokesperson say the handbook was?
9. Who was the guide developed by?
10. What does a UK university want staff to use instead of 'breastfeeding'?

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2102/210219-gender-neutral-language.html>

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'gender' and 'language'.

gender	language

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• avoid• issued• part• instead• place• neither	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• explains• identify• added• just• assist• substitute
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GENDER-NEUTRAL LANGUAGE DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

1. What did you think when you read the headline?
2. What images are in your mind when you hear the word 'gender'?
3. What do you know about gender-neutral language?
4. What do you think of the English language?
5. How does your language deal with gender?
6. What do you think of replacing words like 'mother' and 'father'?
7. What do you think of the term 'gestational parent'?
8. What do you think of the term 'non-birthing parent'?
9. What do you know about non-binary people?
10. What three adjectives best describe this story?

University staff asked not to say 'mother' and 'father' – 19th February, 2021
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GENDER-NEUTRAL LANGUAGE DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

11. Did you like reading this article? Why/not?
12. What do you think of when you hear the word 'language'?
13. What do you think about what you read?
14. Should language change to make all people feel included?
15. Should the word 'human' be changed because 'man' is in it?
16. What do you think of titles like 'Mr,' 'Miss,' 'Mrs' and 'Ms'?
17. Should we say 'actor' and 'lion' for males and females?
18. What advice do you have for ANU's Gender Institute?
19. What do you think of the term 'chestfeeding' instead of 'breastfeeding'?
20. What questions would you like to ask the university?