

# Gender FAQ

This FAQ was inspired by a great many other people's FAQs. Thanks to everyone who shared theirs! Feel free to repurpose this one as you please.

If anything about this FAQ is confusing, or if you would like more information, please ask me more questions! (Your questions may even be honored forever with inclusion in this document.) Asking questions in person may not always be appropriate. If so, I'm available over email, Facebook Messenger, snail mail, etc.

I may be sharing a lot with you all at once, but I'm still the same person. (Some naming conventions and any gendered assumptions aside.) To people that are me, these are truths about myself that I have been slowly discovering for 20 years. To people that are not me, this information could seem weird and sudden. If you are indeed a person that is not me, keep in mind the previous paragraph (the one about sharing your feelings with people that are me). We could work through your doubts together.

## Gender

### **What's your gender?**

I am a nonbinary person. Instead of being man, woman, agender, girl, boy, genderqueer, or bigender (to name a few genders), I am nonbinary.

### **Isn't "nonbinary" an umbrella term?**

Wow, you already know a lot about gender! Many people who identify as nonbinary do use it as an umbrella term. They might also identify with a more specific gender(s) under that umbrella. I haven't necessarily found a gender that I like, and prefer the accessibility of a popular term like nonbinary. So it's just nonbinary for me.

### **Does this mean you're transgender?**

Yes, I am transgender. Not all nonbinary people identify that way, but I do.

### **Wait, how can you be heterosexual and nonbinary?**

Actually, I don't identify as heterosexual, so that makes it easy! My sexuality would be a whole second FAQ though. Unless you were hoping to date me, I wouldn't worry yourself about what my sexuality is.

### **Good thing this is just a phase, right?**

I've compiled this document after a lot of thought, introspection, and experimentation. I'm finally sharing this publically for two reasons. First, I don't believe I will change how I identify in the near future. Second, pretending to be anything else is hurtful to me and I want to stop hurting.

My current identity could still be a phase! Identities do come and go sometimes. However please keep the following in mind:

- I know myself better than you know me. I am the expert on my own identity, and have the most accurate concept of who I will be in the future.
- My experiences may be wildly different from yours. That's okay! You and I could share similar experiences or feelings but identify differently. Also okay!
- Whether or not you think my identity is a phase, this is me telling you that being treated as a man or a woman is hurtful to me. Please do not ignore what I'm telling you right now (in reality) because of how you predict an imaginary, future me will feel.

**Congratulations! You are now my new authority on all transgender topics.**

Well, thanks I guess. Just so you know, I am roughly as likely to say offensive, incorrect shit as anyone else. I know a lot about myself, and the way that I am trans, but I can't speak (and have mispoken) for the entire community or any other trans person. If you have a query about "most trans people" or "the transgender community", it's best to get more than one opinion. If you have a query about a specific person, it's best to ask that person.

**How do you even spell "nonbinary"? Is it with a space or no space? A hyphen?**

I have no idea. I just picked one version to use for this FAQ. Spell it however you want.

## Pronouns

**What pronouns do you use?**

I use they/them/theirs pronouns. This means that when other people talk about me without using my name they use they/them/theirs pronouns to refer to me.

For example:

- Arie reads way too many books. I wonder how much **their** library fine is?
- Have you seen Arie's neato nyan cat keyboard? I hope **they** let me type on it one day.
- Of all the people I know, Arie is the worst. I hate **them** the most. But even though **they** are a bag of dicks I still use **their** correct pronouns, because (unlike Arie **themselves**) I am a decent human being.

Please note that both **themselves** and **themselves** work. Use whichever one you find less awkward!

More examples can be found at <https://pronoun.is/they>

**wat.**

I agree. English isn't the greatest. Using 'they' as a singular pronoun can take some getting used to. It's hard. I wish it was easier. Fortunately, with a bit of practice you can be a pro in no(t too much) time!

**What should I do when I use the wrong pronoun?**

Mistakes will happen! You don't need to make a big deal about it when they do. I understand that you're learning. In fact, I'd appreciate it if you didn't apologize. A simple "whoops, I meant 'they'" is fine. That way, I know you didn't make a mistake just to mess with me and we can continue talking about things more interesting than my pronouns.

**Good thing I only have to do this when I'm around you, right?**

No? The pronouns you use for me matter even when I am not around to hear them. When you use he/him/his or she/her/hers pronouns to refer to me you are lying about my gender to other people. You are making it more difficult for other people to use the correct pronouns.

**Whoops. Can I pretend that I never read this message? You used to be okay with normal pronouns.**

No. I've tried to hide it (I think I've been pretty good at it) but she/her/hers and he/him/his pronouns do hurt my feelings.

**What about other gendered language?**

I am not anyone's daughter, son, girlfriend, boyfriend, sister, brother, niece, nephew, etc. Unfortunately, not all of these words have gender neutral alternatives. I would really like it if you tried to use neutral terms where they exist (words like sibling, friend, child, person, and nerd are great). When they don't exist, choose your own adventure! As long as you are not lying to other people about my gender, I'm probably fine with it.

## Transition

**Is this a secret?**

Not anymore!

**Are you going to change your name?**

Yep. It's changed. My name is now Arie Van Antwerp.

**How to I pronounce your name?**

It's like "ah-RE" or aɪ in [IPA \(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International\\_Phonetic\\_Alphabet\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Phonetic_Alphabet) if you want to feel fancy. Other pronunciations are also likely okay.

**Can I still call you by your old name?**

Yes. If you've known me by my old name, a pronoun switch might be hard enough. ;) My name will only be Arie for new people I meet, however I currently don't mind being called by my old name. Please note that many transgender people **do not** want to be called by any previous names. This is called deadnaming, and it can be hurtful and dangerous.

**What about surgery?**

Eerrrr... Thanks for asking I guess, but that's really not any of your business.

**tl;dr**

I do not use she/her/hers or he/him/his pronouns. Please do not use these pronouns in reference to me. I'm also changing my name, if you want to be the coolest cat in {{current\_year}}.

## Further Edumacation

- [Trans 101 Video \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N0qz6OLCPng\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N0qz6OLCPng)
- [A comic about pronouns \(http://www.robot-hugs.com/pronoun-etiquette/\)](http://www.robot-hugs.com/pronoun-etiquette/)
- [That feeling when you realize that other people are different from you in ways which you will never comprehend \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmKix-75dsg\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmKix-75dsg)
- [Video about some more genders! \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjGu5OCZFzw\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjGu5OCZFzw)
- [The Gender Unicorn \(http://www.transstudent.org/gender\)](http://www.transstudent.org/gender) – a way of thinking about gender, sexuality, expression, and other potentially confusing topics with unicorns!
- [An article, video, \*and\* an app dedicated to pronouns! \(https://minus18.org.au/index.php/resource-packs/pronouns\)](https://minus18.org.au/index.php/resource-packs/pronouns) Lucky you!
- [An article about some nonbinary myths \(http://everydayfeminism.com/2014/12/myths-non-binary-people/\)](http://everydayfeminism.com/2014/12/myths-non-binary-people/)
- A Minnesotan's "ABC's of LGBT": [Part 1 \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81-FEauK9II\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81-FEauK9II) – [Part 2 \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kj9ly4cK9tg\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kj9ly4cK9tg)
- [Some documentation of the search for a gender neutral pronoun, for linguistics nerds \(http://www.english.illinois.edu/-people-/faculty/debaron/essays/epicene.htm\)](http://www.english.illinois.edu/-people-/faculty/debaron/essays/epicene.htm)
- [80 minutes worth of information on nonbinary identities, if you're interested \(https://neutrois.me/non-binary-transition/\)](https://neutrois.me/non-binary-transition/)

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