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**Level 6 – 20th September, 2019**

## **The word 'they' is now also a singular pronoun**

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<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1909/190920-the-pronoun-they.html>

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**Please try Levels 4 and 5 (they are easier).**

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# THE ARTICLE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1909/190920-the-pronoun-they.html>

The reference book company Merriam-Webster has added a new definition of the pronoun "they" to its famous Webster's Dictionary. It now lists the word "they" as referring to a "single person whose gender identity is non-binary". This will be welcome news for those who identify neither as male nor female - people with non-binary identities. Many institutions have already incorporated a gender-neutral option into their official forms. A growing number of local governments, schools and airlines have introduced the gender choice of "X" to accommodate people who do not consider themselves as male or female, and for gender fluid people who switch between different genders.

Merriam-Webster stated that the use of "they" in place of "he" or "she" recognizes people who did not "conform to an expected gender expression, or who seemed to be neither male nor female". It added: "We've struggled to find the right language to describe these people, and in particular, the right pronouns." It points out that the word "they" has been used as a singular pronoun since the late 1300s. William Shakespeare used it in this way in the early 17th century. In 1898, the playwright George Bernard Shaw wrote in his play Antony and Cleopatra that: "No man goes to battle to be killed....But they do get killed." Merriam-Webster says that today, "nearly everyone uses the singular "they" in casual conversation".

Sources: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2019/09/17/merriam-webster-adds-non-binary-pronoun-they-dictionary/>  
<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/09/17/us/merriam-webster-nonbinary-pronoun-they-trnd/index.html>  
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/they>

# WARM-UPS

**1. PRONOUNS:** Students walk around the class and talk to other students about pronouns. 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?

reference / definition / list / gender / welcome news / institutions / gender / female / they / conform / male / language / pronouns / singular / playwright / battle / casual

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

**3. ENGLISH GRAMMAR:** Students A **strongly** believe English grammar should be simplified; Students B **strongly** believe otherwise. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**4. GRAMMAR:** What is difficult about these grammar points? What is the best way to master them? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners often and share what you wrote.

	Difficulties	How To Master Them
Pronouns		
Articles		
Conjunctions		
Prepositions		
Verbs		
Adjectives		

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

**6. PRONOUN TYPES:** Rank these with your partner. Put the most difficult pronouns to use at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Subject pronouns
- Object Pronouns
- Possessive pronouns
- Demonstrative pronouns
- Reflexive pronouns
- Interrogative pronouns
- Relative pronouns
- All pronouns

# VOCABULARY MATCHING

## Paragraph 1

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| 1. reference    | a. Describe oneself as belonging to a particular category or group.                            |
| 2. definition   | b. An established official organization having an important role.                              |
| 3. binary       | c. The use of a source of information in order to find out something.                          |
| 4. identify     | d. Denoting or relating to a person who does not identify themselves as having a fixed gender. |
| 5. institution  | e. A statement of the exact meaning of a word, especially in a dictionary.                     |
| 6. accommodate  | f. Relating to, composed of, or involving two things.  |
| 7. gender fluid | g. Fit in with the wishes or needs of.   |

## Paragraph 2

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| 8. conform     | h. Relaxed and without formality.  |
| 9. expected    | i. Behave according to socially acceptable conventions or standards.         |
| 10. struggled  | j. Regard something as likely to happen.                                     |
| 11. singular   | k. A person who writes plays.  |
| 12. playwright | l. Of a word or form denoting or referring to just one person or thing.      |
| 13. battle     | m. Tried very hard to achieve or attain something in the face of difficulty. |
| 14. casual     | n. A long fight between large organized armed forces.                        |

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1909/190920-the-pronoun-they.html>

## 1. TRUE / FALSE:

Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- a. The article says Merriam-Webster is the biggest dictionary company. **T / F**
- b. 'They' refers to a single person whose gender identity is non-binary. **T / F**
- c. Some airlines have a gender choice of 'X' for gender-neutral people. **T / F**
- d. Gender fluid people are those who switch between different genders. **T / F**
- e. Merriam-Webster found it easy to describe gender-neutral people. **T / F**
- f. The article said the first use of 'they' as a singular pronoun was in 1598. **T / F**
- g. Shakespeare never used 'they' as a singular pronoun. **T / F**
- h. Merriam-Webster says most people use the singular 'they' today. **T / F**

## 2. SYNONYM MATCH:

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

- |                      |               |
|----------------------|---------------|
| 1. <b>definition</b> | a. relate     |
| 2. <b>famous</b>     | b. nowadays   |
| 3. <b>identify</b>   | c. increasing |
| 4. <b>growing</b>    | d. informal   |
| 5. <b>switch</b>     | e. battled    |
| 6. <b>conform</b>    | f. meaning    |
| 7. <b>struggled</b>  | g. manner     |
| 8. <b>way</b>        | h. follow     |
| 9. <b>today</b>      | i. renowned   |
| 10. <b>casual</b>    | j. transition |

## 3. PHRASE MATCH:

(Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. a single person whose gender identity | a. 17th century    |
| 2. welcome                               | b. fluid people    |
| 3. incorporated a gender-                | c. the late 1300s  |
| 4. introduced the gender choice          | d. is non-binary   |
| 5. gender                                | e. to be killed    |
| 6. who seemed to be neither              | f. neutral option  |
| 7. used as a singular pronoun since      | g. conversation    |
| 8. in the early                          | h. of "X"          |
| 9. No man goes to battle                 | i. male nor female |
| 10. in casual                            | j. news            |

# GAP FILL

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1909/190920-the-pronoun-they.html>

The reference book company Merriam-Webster has added a new (1) \_\_\_\_\_ of the pronoun "they" to its famous Webster's Dictionary. It now (2) \_\_\_\_\_ the word "they" as referring to a "single person whose gender identity is non-binary". This will be welcome news for those who (3) \_\_\_\_\_ neither as male nor female - people with non-binary identities. Many (4) \_\_\_\_\_ have already incorporated a gender-neutral option into their official forms. A growing number of (5) \_\_\_\_\_ governments, schools and airlines have introduced the gender (6) \_\_\_\_\_ of "X" to accommodate people who do not consider (7) \_\_\_\_\_ as male or female, and for gender fluid people who (8) \_\_\_\_\_ between different genders.

Merriam-Webster stated that the use of "they" in (9) \_\_\_\_\_ of "he" or "she" recognizes people who did not (10) \_\_\_\_\_ to an expected gender expression, or who seemed to be neither male nor female". It added: "We've (11) \_\_\_\_\_ to find the right language to describe these people, and in particular, the right pronouns." It points out that the word "they" has been used as a (12) \_\_\_\_\_ pronoun since the late 1300s. William Shakespeare used it in this way in the early 17th (13) \_\_\_\_\_. In 1898, the playwright George Bernard Shaw wrote in his (14) \_\_\_\_\_ Antony and Cleopatra that: "No man goes to (15) \_\_\_\_\_ to be killed....But they do get killed." Merriam-Webster says that today, "nearly everyone uses the singular "they" in (16) \_\_\_\_\_ conversation".

*institutions*

*choice*

*lists*

*switch*

*definition*

*themselves*

*identify*

*local*

*struggled*

*casual*

*place*

*century*

*battle*

*conform*

*singular*

*play*

# LISTENING – Guess the answers. Listen to check.

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1909/190920-the-pronoun-they.html>

- 1) The reference book company Merriam-Webster has added a new \_\_\_\_\_ pronoun
  - a. definite shun of the
  - b. definition of the
  - c. deaf ignition of the
  - d. deft in nation of the
- 2) It now lists the word "they" as referring to \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. a singular person
  - b. a single person
  - c. a singles person
  - d. a singled person
- 3) those who identify neither as male nor female - people with \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. non-binary identities
  - b. not-binary identities
  - c. now-binary identities
  - d. nor-binary identities
- 4) institutions have already incorporated a gender-neutral option into \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. their officially forms
  - b. their official form
  - c. their official forms
  - d. their officially form
- 5) people who do not consider themselves as male or female, and for \_\_\_\_\_ people
  - a. gender fluidity
  - b. gender fluids
  - c. gender fluid
  - d. gender fluidic
- 6) in place of "he" or "she" recognizes people who did \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. not confirm
  - b. not con farm
  - c. not conifer am
  - d. not conform
- 7) We've struggled to find the right language to \_\_\_\_\_ people
  - a. describe these
  - b. describe them
  - c. describe they
  - d. describe those
- 8) It points out that the word "they" has been used as a \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. singularity pronoun
  - b. singles pronoun
  - c. singular pronoun
  - d. singularize pronoun
- 9) William Shakespeare used it in this way in the \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. early 17th centuries
  - b. early 17th centurion
  - c. early 17th centenary
  - d. early 17th century
- 10) says that today, "nearly everyone uses the singular "they" in \_\_\_\_\_"
  - a. casual conversation
  - b. causal conversation
  - c. castle conversation
  - d. crystal conversation

# LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1909/190920-the-pronoun-they.html>

The reference book company Merriam-Webster (1) \_\_\_\_\_ new definition of the pronoun "they" to its famous Webster's Dictionary. It now (2) \_\_\_\_\_ "they" as referring to a "single person whose gender identity is non-binary". This will (3) \_\_\_\_\_ for those who identify neither as male nor female - people with non-binary identities. Many institutions (4) \_\_\_\_\_ a gender-neutral option into their official forms. A (5) \_\_\_\_\_ local governments, schools and airlines have introduced the gender choice of "X" to accommodate people who do not consider themselves as male or female, and for gender (6) \_\_\_\_\_ switch between different genders.

Merriam-Webster stated that the use of "they" in place of "he" or "she" recognizes people who (7) \_\_\_\_\_ to an expected gender expression, or who seemed to be neither male nor female". It added: "We've struggled to find the right (8) \_\_\_\_\_ these people, and in particular, the right pronouns." It points out that the word "they" has been used as a singular pronoun (9) \_\_\_\_\_ 1300s. William Shakespeare used it in (10) \_\_\_\_\_ the early 17th century. In 1898, the playwright George Bernard Shaw wrote in his play Antony and Cleopatra that: "No man goes to battle (11) \_\_\_\_\_....But they do get killed." Merriam-Webster says that today, "nearly everyone uses the singular "they" (12) \_\_\_\_\_".



# COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1909/190920-the-pronoun-they.html>

1. What kind of company did the article say Merriam-Webster was?
2. What kind of gender identity does the pronoun "they" now encompass?
3. What kind of news did the article say this might be?
4. What alternative gender choice did airlines give on forms?
5. What do gender-fluid people switch between?
6. What did Merriam-Webster say it had struggled to find?
7. Since when has "they" been used in the singular?
8. Who used "they" as a singular pronoun in the 17th century?
9. What famous play was mentioned in the article?
10. When do most people use "they" in the singular?

# MULTIPLE CHOICE - QUIZ

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1909/190920-the-pronoun-they.html>

- 1) What kind of company did the article say Merriam-Webster was?
  - a) a gender-neutral company
  - b) a lexicographer
  - c) a reference book company
  - d) a dictionary company
- 2) What kind of gender identity does the pronoun "they" now encompass?
  - a) non-binary
  - b) anyone
  - c) everyone
  - d) male or female
- 3) What kind of news did the article say this might be?
  - a) fantastic news
  - b) welcome news
  - c) bad news
  - d) breaking news
- 4) What alternative gender choice did airlines give on forms?
  - a) Q
  - b) Z
  - c) Y
  - d) X
- 5) What do gender-fluid people switch between?
  - a) different prepositions
  - b) different articles
  - c) different genders
  - d) different drinks
- 6) What did Merriam-Webster say it had struggled to find?
  - a) the right page
  - b) the right language
  - c) some software
  - d) the right balance
- 7) Since when has "they" been used in the singular?
  - a) the early-to-mid 1600s
  - b) the mid 1500s
  - c) the early 1400s
  - d) the late 1300s
- 8) Who used "they" as a singular pronoun in the 17th century?
  - a) the UK's Prime Minister
  - b) Shakespeare
  - c) King James
  - d) Queen Elizabeth I
- 9) What famous play was mentioned in the article?
  - a) Death of a Salesman
  - b) Antony and Cleopatra
  - c) Romeo and Juliet
  - d) Joan of Arc
- 10) When do most people use "they" in the singular?
  - a) in casual conversation
  - b) in the mornings
  - c) at restaurants
  - d) when they are tired

# ROLE PLAY

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1909/190920-the-pronoun-they.html>

## **Role A – Subject Pronouns**

You think subject pronouns are the most difficult to master. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their pronouns are easier. Also, tell the others which are the easiest of these (and why): possessive pronouns, reflexive pronouns or relative pronouns.

## **Role B – Possessive Pronouns**

You think possessive pronouns are the most difficult to master. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their pronouns are easier. Also, tell the others which are the easiest of these (and why): subject pronouns, reflexive pronouns or relative pronouns.

## **Role C – Reflexive Pronouns**

You think reflexive pronouns are the most difficult to master. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their pronouns are easier. Also, tell the others which are the easiest of these (and why): possessive pronouns, subject pronouns or relative pronouns.

## **Role D – Relative Pronouns**

You think relative pronouns are the most difficult to master. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their pronouns are easier. Also, tell the others which are the easiest of these (and why): possessive pronouns, reflexive pronouns or subject pronouns.

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1909/190920-the-pronoun-they.html>

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

pronoun	they

- 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"><li>• book</li><li>• lists</li><li>• welcome</li><li>• option</li><li>• number</li><li>• consider</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• place</li><li>• right</li><li>• points</li><li>• way</li><li>• play</li><li>• casual</li></ul>
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# PRONOUNS SURVEY

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1909/190920-the-pronoun-they.html>

Write five GOOD questions about pronouns in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

# PRONOUNS 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 'pronoun'?
3. What do you think of dictionaries?
4. What are the good and bad things about dictionaries?
5. What do you think of pronouns?
6. What do you think of using 'they' in the singular?
7. How good is it that dictionaries are recognizing non-binary people?
8. What do you think of the choice 'X' instead of 'male' or 'female'?
9. Should languages not have gender-based pronouns?
10. What do you know about gender fluidity?

*The word 'they' is now also a singular pronoun – 20th September, 2019*  
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# PRONOUNS 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 'dictionary'?
13. What do you think about what you read?
14. What is your favorite dictionary?
15. How difficult is the pronoun system in English?
16. What are gender pronouns like in your language?
17. What is the function of pronouns?
18. What different types of pronoun are there in English?
19. How important is using grammar correctly in conversation?
20. What questions would you like to ask the dictionary?

## **DISCUSSION (Write your own questions)**

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

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

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## **DISCUSSION (Write your own questions)**

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

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

# LANGUAGE - CLOZE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1909/190920-the-pronoun-they.html>

The (1) \_\_\_\_\_ book company Merriam-Webster has added a new definition of the pronoun "they" to its famous Webster's Dictionary. It now (2) \_\_\_\_\_ the word "they" as referring to a "single person whose gender identity is non-binary". This will be (3) \_\_\_\_\_ news for those who identify neither as male nor female - people with non-binary identities. Many institutions have already (4) \_\_\_\_\_ a gender-neutral option into their official forms. A (5) \_\_\_\_\_ number of local governments, schools and airlines have introduced the gender choice of "X" to accommodate people who do not consider themselves as male or female, and for gender (6) \_\_\_\_\_ people who switch between different genders.

Merriam-Webster (7) \_\_\_\_\_ that the use of "they" in place of "he" or "she" recognizes people who did not "conform to an expected gender expression, or who seemed to be neither male nor female". It added: "We've (8) \_\_\_\_\_ to find the right language to describe these people, and in particular, the right pronouns." It points (9) \_\_\_\_\_ that the word "they" has been used as a singular pronoun since the (10) \_\_\_\_\_ 1300s. William Shakespeare used it in this way in the early 17th century. In 1898, the (11) \_\_\_\_\_ George Bernard Shaw wrote in his play Antony and Cleopatra that: "No man goes to battle to be killed....But they do get killed." Merriam-Webster says that today, "nearly everyone uses the singular "they" in (12) \_\_\_\_\_ conversation".

## Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- |     |                     |                  |                |                |
|-----|---------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1.  | (a) referential     | (b) reference    | (c) refer      | (d) referred   |
| 2.  | (a) lusts           | (b) lists        | (c) lasts      | (d) lost       |
| 3.  | (a) congratulations | (b) greetings    | (c) please     | (d) welcome    |
| 4.  | (a) papered         | (b) incorporated | (c) cracked    | (d) reasoned   |
| 5.  | (a) grown           | (b) growing      | (c) growth     | (d) grows      |
| 6.  | (a) fluidity        | (b) fluids       | (c) fluid      | (d) fluidic    |
| 7.  | (a) slated          | (b) skated       | (c) stated     | (d) sated      |
| 8.  | (a) written         | (b) listed       | (c) struggled  | (d) handled    |
| 9.  | (a) of              | (b) in           | (c) up         | (d) out        |
| 10. | (a) late            | (b) past         | (c) passed     | (d) old        |
| 11. | (a) playwright      | (b) play light   | (c) play right | (d) play write |
| 12. | (a) causal          | (b) castle       | (c) casual     | (d) crystal    |



# SPELLING

## Paragraph 1

1. The rferenece book company
2. a new nfiieitdon of the pronoun
3. whose gender identity is non-ianbry
4. Many sinttutioins have already
5. a gender-nrteual option
6. the gender choice of "X" to mamaeotoccd people

## Paragraph 2

7. an expected gender ensproxies
8. We've gseutdglr to find the right language
9. used as a ugnlsari pronoun
10. in the early 17th cetrnyu
11. the yltpiawhgr George Bernard
12. in slauac conversation

# PUT THE TEXT BACK TOGETHER

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1909/190920-the-pronoun-they.html>

**Number these lines in the correct order.**

- ( ) nor female - people with non-binary identities. Many institutions have already incorporated a gender-neutral
- ( ) 17th century. In 1898, the playwright George Bernard Shaw wrote in his play Antony and
- ( ) introduced the gender choice of "X" to accommodate people who do not consider themselves
- ( ) says that today, "nearly everyone uses the singular "they" in casual conversation".
- ( ) option into their official forms. A growing number of local governments, schools and airlines have
- ( ) Webster's Dictionary. It now lists the word "they" as referring to a "single person whose gender
- ( ) Cleopatra that: "No man goes to battle to be killed....But they do get killed." Merriam-Webster
- ( ) Merriam-Webster stated that the use of "they" in place of "he" or "she" recognizes people who did not "conform to an
- ( ) identity is non-binary". This will be welcome news for those who identify neither as male
- ( ) "they" has been used as a singular pronoun since the late 1300s. William Shakespeare used it in this way in the early
- ( **1** ) The reference book company Merriam-Webster has added a new definition of the pronoun "they" to its famous
- ( ) find the right language to describe these people, and in particular, the right pronouns." It points out that the word
- ( ) expected gender expression, or who seemed to be neither male nor female". It added: "We've struggled to
- ( ) as male or female, and for gender fluid people who switch between different genders.

# PUT THE WORDS IN THE RIGHT ORDER

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1909/190920-the-pronoun-they.html>

1. definition Added of "they" . new a pronoun the
2. identity gender is whose single A non-binary . person
3. incorporated a already have Institutions option . gender-neutral
4. have introduced the choice "X" . of gender Airlines
5. fluid people between switch different who genders . Gender
6. "she" "He" conform . people recognizes or didn't who
7. language . right We've struggled the find to
8. the singular as Used late-1300s . since a pronoun
9. battle to be goes man killed . No to
10. singular casual Everyone "they" the in uses conversation .

# CIRCLE THE CORRECT WORD (20 PAIRS)

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1909/190920-the-pronoun-they.html>

The *reference / refer* book company Merriam-Webster has added a new definition of the pronoun "they" to its *famously / famous* Webster's Dictionary. It now *lasts / lists* the word "they" as referring to a "single person whose *gender / gander* identity is non-binary". This will be welcome news for those who identify neither as male *not / nor* female - people with non-binary identities. Many *instructions / institutions* have already incorporated a gender-neutral *option / caption* into their official forms. A growing number of *local / locally* governments, schools and airlines have introduced the gender *choose / choice* of "X" to accommodate people who do not consider themselves as male or female, and for gender *fluid / flew* people who switch between different genders.

Merriam-Webster *slated / stated* that the use of "they" in place of "he" or "she" recognizes people who did not "*confirm / conform* to an expected gender expression, or who *seemed / seems* to be neither male nor female". It added: "We've struggled to find the *right / write* language to describe these people, and in *peculiar / particular*, the right pronouns." It points out that the word "they" has been used as a singular pronoun since the *past / late* 1300s. William Shakespeare used it *in / on* this way in the early 17th century. In 1898, the playwright George Bernard Shaw *wrote / written* in his play Antony and Cleopatra that: "No man goes to battle to be *died / killed*....But they do get killed." Merriam-Webster says that today, "nearly everyone uses the singular "they" in *causal / casual* conversation".

**Talk about the connection between each pair of words in italics, and why the correct word is correct.**

# INSERT THE VOWELS (a, e, i, o, u)

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The r\_f\_r\_n\_c\_ b\_\_k c\_m\_p\_n\_y M\_r\_r\_\_m - W\_b\_s\_t\_r  
h\_s \_d\_d\_d \_n\_w d\_f\_n\_t\_\_n \_f th\_ p\_r\_n\_\_n "t  
h\_y" t\_\_t\_s f\_m\_\_s W\_b\_s\_t\_r's D\_c\_t\_\_n\_r\_y. It  
n\_w l\_s\_t\_s th\_ w\_r\_d "th\_y" \_s r\_f\_r\_r\_n\_g t\_ \_  
"s\_n\_g\_l\_ p\_r\_s\_n w\_h\_s\_ g\_n\_d\_r \_d\_n\_t\_t\_y \_s n\_n -  
b\_n\_r\_y". Th\_s w\_ll b\_ w\_l\_c\_m\_ n\_w\_s f\_r th\_s\_  
w\_h\_ \_d\_n\_t\_f\_y n\_\_ th\_r \_s m\_l\_ n\_r f\_m\_l\_ - p\_\_  
p\_l\_ w\_t\_h n\_n - b\_n\_r\_y \_d\_n\_t\_t\_\_s. M\_n\_y \_n\_s  
t\_t\_t\_\_n\_s h\_v\_ \_l\_r\_\_d\_y \_n\_c\_r\_p\_r\_t\_d \_g\_n\_d\_r -  
n\_\_ t\_r\_l\_ p\_t\_\_n \_n\_t\_ th\_\_r \_f\_f\_c\_\_l\_ f\_r\_m\_s. A  
g\_r\_w\_n\_g n\_m\_b\_r \_f l\_c\_l\_ g\_v\_r\_n\_m\_n\_t\_s, s\_c\_h\_\_l  
s \_n\_d \_\_r\_l\_n\_s h\_v\_ \_n\_t\_r\_d\_c\_d th\_ g\_n\_d\_r c  
h\_\_c\_ \_f "X" t\_ \_c\_c\_m\_m\_d\_t\_ p\_\_p\_l\_ w\_h\_ d\_ n\_t  
c\_n\_s\_d\_r th\_m\_s\_l\_v\_s \_s m\_l\_ \_r f\_m\_l\_, \_n\_d f\_r  
g\_n\_d\_r f\_l\_\_d p\_\_p\_l\_ w\_h\_ s\_w\_t\_c\_h b\_t\_w\_\_n d\_f  
f\_r\_n\_t g\_n\_d\_r\_s.

M\_r\_r\_\_m - W\_b\_s\_t\_r s\_t\_t\_d th\_t th\_ \_s\_ \_f "th\_y  
" \_n p\_l\_c\_ \_f "h\_" \_r "sh\_" r\_c\_g\_n\_z\_s p\_\_p\_l\_  
w\_h\_ d\_d n\_t "c\_n\_f\_r\_m t\_ \_n \_x\_p\_c\_t\_d g\_n\_d\_r  
\_x\_p\_r\_s\_s\_\_n, \_r w\_h\_ s\_\_m\_d t\_ b\_ n\_\_ th\_r  
m\_l\_ n\_r f\_m\_l\_". It \_d\_d\_d: "W\_'v\_ s\_t\_r\_g\_g\_l\_d  
t\_ f\_n\_d th\_ r\_g\_h\_t l\_n\_g\_\_g\_ t\_ d\_s\_c\_r\_b\_ th\_s\_  
p\_\_p\_l\_, \_n\_d \_n\_p\_r\_t\_c\_l\_r, th\_ r\_g\_h\_t p\_r\_n\_\_n  
s." It p\_\_n\_t\_s \_\_t th\_t th\_ w\_r\_d "th\_y"  
h\_s b\_\_n \_s\_d \_s \_s\_n\_g\_l\_r p\_r\_n\_\_n s\_n\_c\_ th\_  
l\_t\_ 1300s. W\_ll\_\_m Sh\_k\_s\_p\_\_r\_ \_s\_d \_t \_n t  
h\_s w\_y \_n th\_ \_\_r\_ly 17th c\_n\_t\_r\_y. In 18  
98, th\_ p\_l\_y\_w\_r\_g\_h\_t G\_\_r\_g\_ B\_r\_n\_r\_d Sh\_w w  
r\_t\_ \_n h\_s p\_l\_y A\_n\_t\_n\_y \_n\_d C\_l\_\_p\_t\_r\_ th\_t:  
"N\_ m\_n g\_\_s t\_ b\_t\_t\_l\_ t\_ b\_ k\_l\_l\_d... B\_t t  
h\_y d\_ g\_t k\_l\_l\_d." M\_r\_r\_\_m - W\_b\_s\_t\_r s\_y\_s t  
h\_t t\_d\_y, "n\_\_r\_ly \_v\_r\_y\_n\_ \_s\_s th\_ s\_n\_g\_l\_r  
"th\_y" \_n c\_s\_\_l c\_n\_v\_r\_s\_t\_\_n".

# PUNCTUATE THE TEXT AND ADD CAPITALS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1909/190920-the-pronoun-they.html>

the reference book company merriamwebster has added a new definition of the pronoun they to its famous websters dictionary it now lists the word they as referring to a single person whose gender identity is nonbinary this will be welcome news for those who identify neither as male nor female people with nonbinary identities many institutions have already incorporated a genderneutral option into their official forms a growing number of local governments schools and airlines have introduced the gender choice of x to accommodate people who do not consider themselves as male or female and for gender fluid people who switch between different genders

merriamwebster stated that the use of they in place of he or she recognizes people who did not conform to an expected gender expression or who seemed to be neither male nor female it added weve struggled to find the right language to describe these people and in particular the right pronouns it points out that the word they has been used as a singular pronoun since the late 1300s william shakespeare used it in this way in the early 17th century in 1898 the playwright george bernard shaw wrote in his play antony and cleopatra that no man goes to battle to be killedbut they do get killed merriamwebster says that today nearly everyone uses the singular they in casual conversation.

# PUT A SLASH ( / ) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/1909/190920-the-pronoun-they.html>

The reference book company Merriam-Webster has added a new definition of the pronoun "they" to its famous Webster's Dictionary. It now lists the word "they" as referring to a "single person whose gender identity is non-binary". This will be welcome news for those who identify neither as male nor female - people with non-binary identities. Many institutions have already incorporated a gender-neutral option into their official forms. A growing number of local governments, schools and airlines have introduced the gender choice of "X" to accommodate people who do not consider themselves as male or female, and for gender fluid people who switch between different genders. Merriam-Webster stated that the use of "they" in place of "he" or "she" recognizes people who do not conform to an expected gender expression, or whose gender is neither male nor female. It added: "We've struggled to find the right language to describe these people, and in particular, the right pronouns." It points out that the word "they" has been used as a singular pronoun since the late 1300s. William Shakespeare used it in this way in the early 17th century. In 1898, the playwright George Bernard Shaw wrote in his play *Antony and Cleopatra* that: "No mangoes to battle to be killed.... But they do get killed." Merriam-Webster says that today, "nearly everyone uses the singular 'they' in casual conversation".







# HOMework

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find out more about this news story. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. PRONOUNS:** Make a poster about pronouns. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. GRAMMAR:** Write a magazine article about simplifying the whole of English grammar. Include imaginary interviews with people who are for and against this.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?** Write a newspaper article about the next stage in this news story. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Give each other feedback on your articles.

**6. LETTER:** Write a letter to an expert on pronouns. Ask him/her three questions about them. Give him/her three of your opinions of the pronoun system in English. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## VOCABULARY (p.4)

1. c    2. e    3. f    4. a    5. b    6. g    7. d  
8. i    9. j    10. m    11. l    12. k    13. n    14. h

## TRUE / FALSE (p.5)

- a F    b T    c T    d T    e F    f F    g F    h T

## SYNONYM MATCH (p.5)

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. definition | a. meaning    |
| 2. famous     | b. renowned   |
| 3. identify   | c. relate     |
| 4. growing    | d. increasing |
| 5. switch     | e. transition |
| 6. conform    | f. follow     |
| 7. struggled  | g. battled    |
| 8. way        | h. manner     |
| 9. today      | i. nowadays   |
| 10. casual    | j. informal   |

## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS (p.9)

1. A reference book company
2. Non-binary
3. Welcome news
4. X
5. Different genders
6. The right language
7. The late 1300s
8. Shakespeare
9. Antony and Cleopatra
10. In casual conversation

## WORDS IN THE RIGHT ORDER (p.20)

1. Added a new definition of the pronoun "they".
2. A single person whose gender identity is non-binary.
3. Institutions have already incorporated a gender-neutral option.
4. Airlines have introduced the gender choice of "X".
5. Gender fluid people who switch between different genders.
6. "He" or "she" recognizes people who didn't conform.
7. We've struggled to find the right language.
8. Used as a singular pronoun since the late-300s.
9. No man goes to battle to be killed.
10. Everyone uses the singular "they" in casual conversation.

## MULTIPLE CHOICE - QUIZ (p.10)

1. c    2. a    3. b    4. d    5. c    6. b    7. d    8. b    9. b    10. a

## ALL OTHER EXERCISES

Please check for yourself by looking at the Article on page 2.  
(It's good for your English ;-)