Translating **Gender Inclusive Terms** from English to French

English *does not* gender its nouns

Having words that are grammatically nongendered can make it easier to communicate in a gender-neutral manner.

French *does* gender its nouns

Having words that are grammatically binary can make it harder to communicate in a gender inclusive manner.

This guide shares different approaches that can promote the elimination of gendered forms during communication between people. By eliminating these gendered forms, it reduces gender discrimination since non-gendered terms represent all genders. Inclusive writing is crucial as it serves to have non-sexist communication that encourages recognition of the diversity of gender identities. This guide can be useful to the general population, but more specifically to translators who want to adopt a more inclusive language when translating from English to French. When translating non-generic words from English to French, there are different approaches you can take to make the translation inclusive which will be explained below. The use of these, helps the contribution to gender equality.
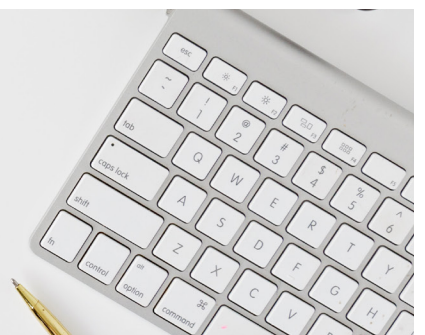
The Median Point

The median point is a punctuation mark used in inclusive writing and it falls between the masculine and feminine endings. The median point can be used to connect the masculine and feminine versions of determinants, nouns, and adjectives. In other words, when this method is used, both masculine and feminine endings are included in a single word which makes it possible to highlight the feminine endings in a text.

Tip:

To avoid binarity, it can be helpful to use the following when referring to people:
- Their names
- Non-gendered titles

The Median Point

Example:

Determinants:

Before (gendered)	After (gender inclusive)
• le or la	• le·a
• son or sa	• son·a
• ton or ta	• ton·a

Nouns:

Before (gendered)	After (gender inclusive)
• infirmier or infirmiere	• infirmier·ière
• assistants or assistantes	• assistant·es or assistant·e·s
• instructeur or instructrice	• instructeur·rice

Adjectives:

Before (gendered)	After (gender inclusive)
• joli or jolie	• joli·e
• joyeux or joyeuse	• joyeux·se
• gentil or gentille	• gentil·lle

To learn more and see more examples on the median point, additional information can be found on the Revue féministe étudiante pluridisciplinaire de l'UQAM.

The Use of « X »

This technique can be used to replace the masculine and feminine endings of nouns and adjectives. The « x » is placed where you would have put your gendered ending.

Example:

Nouns:

Before (gendered)	After (gender inclusive)
• assistant or assistante	• assistantx
• pharmacien or pharmacienne	• pharmacienxe
• professeur or professeure	• professeurx

Adjectives:

Before (gendered)	After (gender inclusive)
• joyeux or joyeuses	• joyeuxe
• content or contente	• contentx
• gentil or gentille	• gentilx

To learn more and see more examples on the use of « x », additional information can be found on the Revue féministe étudiante pluridisciplinaire de l'UQAM.

Use le Doublet Complet

Using le "doublet complet", or mentioning both the masculine and feminine versions of a term, avoids the use of the generic masculine to designate a mixed group of people. In French, generic masculine words are defined as plural masculine terms that are used to encompass groups comprised of all genders. However, when generic masculine terms are used, there is a lack of visibility of women, trans, and non-binary individuals.

Example:

Before (gendered)
- les assistants (this term is the generic masculine)
- les gérants
- les instituteurs

After (gender inclusive)
- les assistants et les assitantes
- les gérants et les gérantes
- les instituteurs et les institutrices

To learn more and see more examples on le doublet complet, additional information can be found on the Guide d'écriture pour toutes et tous de l'UdeM and on the website de l'office québécois de la langue française.
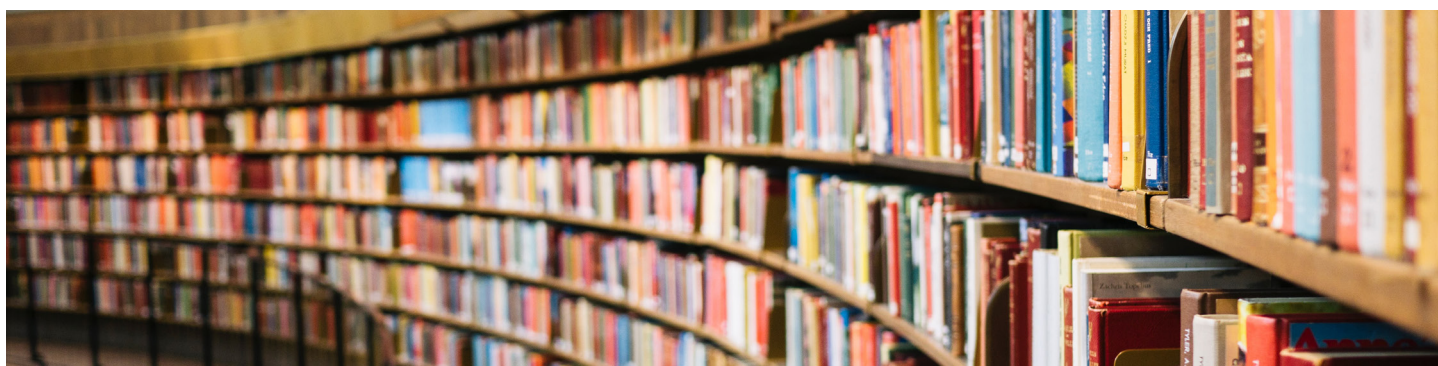
Prioritize Epicene Language

Epicene language can be defined as having characteristics of both sexes or no characteristics of either sex. This technique is non-gendered and inclusive; it can be used to refer to people using non-gendered terms. The epicene terms have the same masculine and feminine form, which makes a text non-gendered.

Example:

Before (gendered)
- jeune fille or jeune garçon
- créateur or créatrice
- acteur connu or actrice connue

After (gender inclusive)
- jeune enfant
- artiste
- célébrité

To learn more and see more examples on the usage of epicene language, additional information can be found on the Guide d'écriture pour toutes et tous de l'UdeM, on the website de l'office québécois de la langue française and on the website des travaux publics et services gouvernementaux du Canada.

Use Collective Language

This technique can be used to avoid connecting the masculine and feminine forms of words by instead using collective language. Collective language refers to gender inclusive terms for a group. Using terms that encompass all genders through a non-gendered singular form avoids gendered use of language.

Example:

Before (gendered, collective)
- les citoyens et les citoyennes
- les hommes et les femmes
- les écoliers or les écolières

After (nongendered, individual)
- la communauté
- les gens or les personnes
- les élèves

To learn more and see more examples on the usage of collective language, additional information can be found on the website des travaux publics et services gouvernementaux du Canada.

Use Function and/or Administrative Unit Names

This technique can be used to avoid the use of gendered language by mentioning the position held by the person rather than the title or the administrative unit to which the person is attached.

Example:

Before (gendered, person)
- les administrateurs et les administratrices
- les employés et les employées
- le directeur et la directrice

After (nongendered, function)
- l'administration
- le personnel
- la direction

To learn more and see more examples on the usage of function and/or administrative unit names, additional information can be found on the website des travaux publics et services gouvernementaux du Canada.

Using Gender Inclusive Terms *Reduces*

Stress

Discomfort

Using Gender Inclusive Terms *Increases*

Awareness

Respect Towards Others

Acknowledgement of Diverse Gender Identities

How to Know if You're Being Thoughtful Enough?

Asking someone about their pronouns can relieve stress both for the addresser and addressee.

It's Going to Take Time

It is important that everyone is mindful of language use so that we start to use gender inclusive French terms naturally in everyday life. Getting comfortable with the usage of gender inclusive terms can take time.

- Practice Often in Writing and Verbally
- Stand up for Others
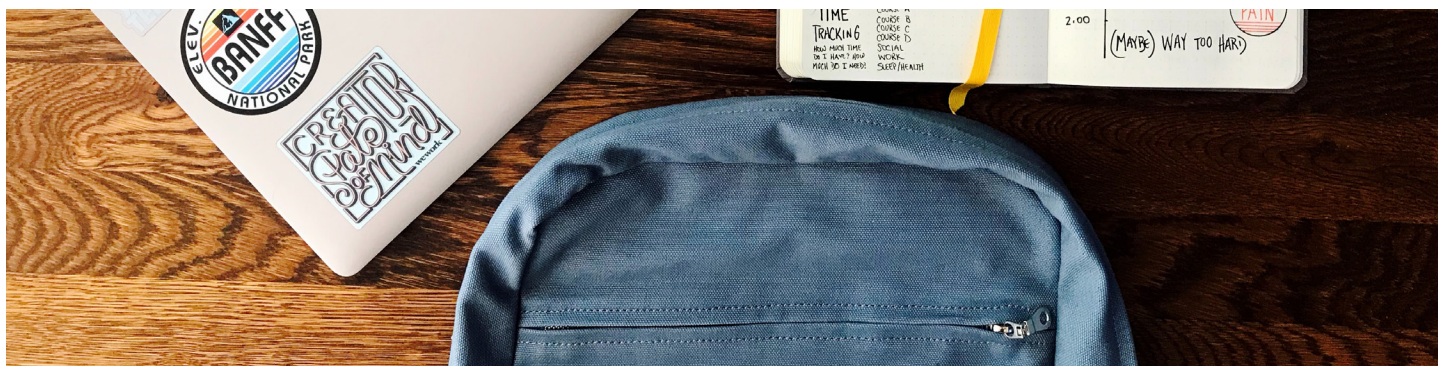
More Information

- btb.termiumplus.gc.ca/tpv2guides/guides/clefsfp/index-eng.html?lang=eng&lettr=indx_catlog_e&page=9CljS-UkLxu8. html#zz9CljS-UkLxu
- bdl.oqlf.gouv.qc.ca/bdl/gabarit_bdl.asp?id=3912

With Thanks To:

Elisabeth Vezina, University of Calgary and Jacynthe Marion, sexologue B.A.

Public Health Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé publique du Canada

The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the Public Health Agency of Canada.