

# Inclusive Language Guide

Instead of...	Use...	Why?
Boys/Girls	Students, you all, friends, everyone, everybody, second-graders, students' names (if they have name tags)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender neutral</li> <li>• Avoids assumption of child's gender</li> </ul>
Ladies/Gentlemen	You all, everyone, everybody, folks, people, esteemed guests or visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender neutral</li> <li>• Avoids assumptions of adult visitor's gender</li> </ul>
Mom/Dad/Parents	Adult/Grownup/Chaperone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender neutral</li> <li>• Avoids assumption there is a legal or genetic relationship</li> <li>• Not everyone with a child identifies as a parent</li> </ul>
Son/Daughter	Child/Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender neutral</li> <li>• Avoids assumption that a person is a parent of a child</li> </ul>
He/She	They	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender neutral</li> <li>• Don't get hung up on grammar. While awkward in writing, "they" sounds natural in most spoken situations.</li> <li>• Only use gendered pronouns if you know the person's gender (do not assume gender from appearance)</li> </ul>
You guys	You all, folks, friends, everyone, everybody, or use names (if visitors have name tags)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender neutral</li> <li>• While "you guys" is a term that Midwesterners think of as gender-neutral, not all our visitors are from the Midwest.</li> </ul>
Family resemblance	Nothing; never share such observations with visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You may see a resemblance where there is none.</li> <li>• On the opposite spectrum, avoid assuming a child is adopted if you do not see a resemblance. Children may visit with adults other than their parents.</li> </ul>
Your house/yard/home	The place you live or reference the way we live today (e.g., Does this French salon look like the rooms we have today?) or include a common reference for the group, such as school rooms/ outside recess space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoids assumptions of wealth and privilege. Not all visitors live in a detached house with a yard.</li> <li>• Avoids assuming a person has a home. Some children on school tours may be homeless.</li> </ul>
Questions about vacation or travel experiences (e.g., "How many of you have been to Rome or Venice?" or "Tell me how you felt when you saw an ocean for the first time.")	Phrasing that avoids assumptions or offers options for opinion (e.g., change "How many of you have been to Rome or Venice?" to "How many of you would enjoy a trip to Rome or Venice?")	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoids assumptions of wealth and privilege.</li> <li>• Not all children will have travel vacations with their families. Focus questions on what visitors hope to experience in the future.</li> </ul>
"These people" or terms which signify the "Other" when discussing objects by unidentified artists	The name of the culture from which the object originates. Continue to reference the culture's name in discussion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many objects with a colonial context were collected without record of artists' names.</li> <li>• Specifically naming the cultural group in discussion respects the creative origin of the object and supports better understanding of its cultural context.</li> </ul>

This guide also merges information from two sources. Many thanks to these authors and their important work on this topic:

1. Mac Buff, *Beyond Bathrooms: Including all Genders through Language*, Viewfinder, March 6, 2019.
2. Margaret Middleton, *Including the 21st Century Family*, The Inclusion, July 7, 2014.