

7th unit, 18 April 2024

When do you use 'they/them' for an unspecified person?

 **ChatGPT**

"They/them" pronouns are often used to refer to an unspecified person when the gender of the individual is unknown or when the person prefers gender-neutral pronouns. This practice is particularly common in inclusive and respectful language usage, where individuals may choose to use gender-neutral pronouns to avoid assumptions about gender identity or to respect individuals who identify outside of the traditional binary gender system. It's a way to be inclusive and respectful of diverse gender identities and expressions.



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Last week's Troublesome Translations worksheet had the explanation:

*'Borrow' means to take something from another person,
knowing you'll give it back to them.'*

In this sentence, 'another person' is an unspecified individual
the gender of which is not known.

To use 'him' or 'her' instead of 'them' would mean to disregard gender neutrality and
give preference to either the male or female attribute.

Thus, 'they' or 'them' are considered to serve as respectful gender-neutral pronouns for
single individuals when they are referred to as e.g.
'somebody', 'anybody', 'everybody', 'person', 'friend', etc.