

# Questions & Answers

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**CSC Memorandum Circular  
No. 12, S. 2005**

## **Use of Non-sexist Language in all Official Documents, Communications and Issuances**

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**National Statistics Office**  
Gender and Development Committee  
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## **WHAT IS CSC MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 12, S. 2005?**

CSC Memorandum Circular No. 12, S. 2005, issued on March 30, 2005, encourages government officials and employees to use non-sexist language in all its official documents, issuances and communications.

## **WHY IS THERE A NEED TO USE NON-SEXIST LANGUAGE?**

Language is an essential tool in communication. It articulates consciousness, reflects culture, and affects socialization. Hence, the need to recognize the importance of transforming language from traditional usage to a more liberating one, that which is gender-sensitive.

## **HOW CAN THE CSC ISSUANCE PROMOTE GENDER AWARENESS?**

Since government officials and employees encounter gender issues everyday, the use of non-sexist language in preparing letters, memoranda and other communications will encourage us to make a conscious effort to avoid implicit and explicit discriminatory language against women and men. This, in turn, will help promote gender-sensitivity in the workplace.

## **HOW CAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES EMPLOY NON-SEXIST LANGUAGE IN THEIR COMMUNICATIONS?**

Below are some suggestions on how to use non-sexist language.

1. Eliminate the generic use of HE, HIS, or HIM unless the antecedent is obviously male by:
  - a. Using plural nouns
    - Traditional: The lawyer uses his brief to guide him.
    - Suggested: The lawyers use their briefs to guide them,
  - b. Deleting he, his, and him altogether, rewording if necessary
    - Traditional: The architect uses his blueprint to guide him.
    - Suggested: The architect uses the blueprint as a guide.
  - c. Substituting articles (a, an, the) for his; using who instead of he
    - Traditional: The writer should know his readers well.
    - Suggested: The writer should know the readers well.
  - d. Using One, We or You
    - Traditional: As one grows older, he becomes more effective.
    - Suggested: As one grows older, one becomes more effective.
  - e. Using the passive voice
    - Traditional: The manager must submit his proposal today.
    - Suggested: The proposal must be submitted by the manager today.

2. Eliminate the generic use of Man, instead use People, Person(s), Human(s), Human Being(s), Humankind, Humanity, The Human Race

Traditional: ordinary man, mankind, the brotherhood of man  
Suggested: ordinary people, humanity, the human family

3. Eliminate sexism in symbolic representations of gender in words, sentences, and text by:

- a. Taking the context of the word, analyzing its meaning, and eliminating sexism in the concept:

Traditional: feelings of brotherhood, feelings of fraternity  
Suggested: feelings of kinship, solidarity

Traditional: the founding father  
Suggested: the founders, the founding leaders

Traditional: the Father of relativity theory  
Suggested: the founder of relativity theory, the initiator of relativity theory

- b. Finding precise words to delineate the thing itself from supposedly sex-linked characteristics:

Traditional: Titanic was a great ship, but she rests at the bottom of the sea.  
Suggested: Titanic was a great ship, but it now rests at the bottom of the sea.

Traditional: "Don't let Mother Nature rip you off! She's out to kill your car's new finish. Stop her . . ."  
Suggested: "Don't let nature rip you off! It's out to kill your car's new finish. Stop it . . ."

4. Eliminate Sexual Stereotyping of Roles by:

- a. Using the same term for both genders when it comes to profession or employment:

Traditional: Salesman, Stewardess  
Suggested: Sales agent, Flight attendant

- b. Using gender fair terms in lexical terms

Traditional: Sportsmanship  
Suggested: Highest ideals of fair play

- c. Treating men and women in a parallel manner

Traditional: I now pronounce you man and wife.  
Suggested: I now pronounce you husband and wife.

- d. Avoiding language that reinforces stereotyping images

Traditional: a man's job, the director's girl Friday  
Suggested: a big job, the director's assistant

- e. Avoiding language that catches attention to the sex role of men and women

Traditional: working mothers, spinsters or old maids  
Suggested: wage-earning mothers, unmarried women

Traditional: busboys, chauvinist pigs  
Suggested: waiter's assistants, male chauvinists

- 5. Eliminate sexism when addressing persons formally by:

- a. Using Ms. instead of Mrs.

Traditional: Mrs. Dela Cruz  
Suggested: Ms. dela Cruz

- b. Using a married woman's first name instead of her husband's

Traditional: Mrs. Juan dela Cruz  
Suggested: Ms. Maria Santos-dela Cruz

- c. Using the corresponding titles for females:

Traditional: Dra. Concepcion Reyes  
Suggested: Dr. Concepcion Reyes

- d. Using the title of the job or group in letters to unknown persons

Traditional: Dear Sir  
Suggested: Dear Editor, Dear Credit Manager, Dear Colleagues