

the GENDER book

By hunter rook and Jay Mays
And a whole big, beautiful community

A fun, illustrated gender 101 for everyone!

Revised and expanded second edition

Preface

Important information

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Second Edition

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Key

“blah” or -name = means this is someone’s direct quote from a survey

facts³ = check out the endnotes on page 103 for more info.

F.Y.I = fun facts that help you be a better ally

* = find the matching * for more info

journal icon = pause and ask yourself the question

How to use this book

Flip through once to ooh and ahh at the pretty pictures. Read the parts most interesting and relevant to you. Then, read it cover to cover. Lend it out to your friend. Leave it somewhere prominent to start conversations. Storytell an excerpt to your cousin’s 2nd grade class. Illustrate your coming out to grandma. Use it to remember you’re never alone.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Introduction](#)

[Common Misconceptions](#)

[Getting Started](#)

[What is Gender?](#)

[Gender Assumptions](#)

[Snapshots of Gender](#)

[Gender Across Cultures](#)

[Two Spirit](#)

[Gender vs. Sex](#)

[Our Diverse Bodies](#)

[Intersex](#)

[Gender on the Brain](#)

[It's a Girl! It's a Boy!](#)

[The Gender Binary & Alternative Systems](#)

[Imagine Gender as a Planet](#)

[Gender Identity](#)

[Gender Expression](#)

[Gender Perception](#)

[Gendered Language](#)

[How Many Genders Do You Have?](#)

[Identity Words](#)

[Gender Across Communities](#)

[Cisgender Women and Cisgender Men](#)

[Gender Nonconforming Folks](#)

[Transgender Women](#)

[Transgender Men](#)

[Nonbinary Identities](#)

[Drag Queens and Drag Kings](#)

[Crossdressers](#)

[What's It Like To Not Have a Gender?](#)

[Your Identity is Valid!](#)

[The Birds & The Bees](#)

[Example Life Timeline](#)

[Walk In Our Shoes](#)

[How to be an Ally](#)

[Full Surveys](#)

[Fill out the Survey!](#)

[Your Bonus Booklet](#)

[About the Creators](#)

[Write in this Book!](#)

[My Gender Worksheet :](#)

[Thank You!](#)

[Glossary](#)

[Your Own Notes](#)

[Endnotes](#)

[Resources](#)

[Additional Information](#)

[Index of Topics](#)

[Back Cover](#)

INTRODUCTION

[a scene in a living room. books are strewn about. there are three humans,a ferret, a labrador retriever, and a frog prince.]

(in Boston's speech bubble) **Hi, my name is Boston.**

.... and this book may blow your mind. If you're like me, you probably grew up with some ideas about what it means to be a boy or a girl.

I remember being told which side of the department store I could buy my bathing suits in, which roles I could play in make-believe games, and how, for some reason, the prince was *always* the hero in fairy tales. Thankfully, I see that is changing now.¹

As I grew up, I realized not everyone fits into these girl/boy boxes. My mom could be the breadwinner, my brother could be sensitive, and my interests might not match some of the things I am "supposed" to like, either.

So I set off to discover all I could about this thing called gender. My friends and I did countless interviews, over 300 surveys, many hours in the library, and a bunch of soul-searching of our own. I met some incredible people along the way whose stories I got permission to share.

(text box) The Gender Book is the result of our efforts

(in Boston's thought bubble) **I bet there's a lot you already know about gender, and we can start from there.**

You might have started with the idea that gender is somehow connected to your body parts or DNA. You might think of gender as having something to do with sexuality. You probably have heard of intersex people. You are fluent in the gender roles of the culture you grew up in (they will be different from mine, unless you happened to be raised in Texas in the 1980's!).

You may know that not everyone fits these roles, and that gender affirming surgeries and hormones exist to help those who want them. You know on most government forms there are only two options for gender, and that even your doctor uses the words "gender" and "sex" interchangeably. Maybe you've heard of gender neutral pronouns like "they/them." You probably also know that bullying is a real problem for boys who are "too feminine" or other kids who don't fit traditional roles. What else do you already know about gender?

Whew! That's a lot that you already know. On the next page, we'll investigate which of these are true and which may be (very) common misconceptions.

(in Tyesha's speech bubble) Exploring gender can be a challenge, but it's also a lot of fun. The benefits are that you get more freedom to express yourself and a whole new way of looking at the world. Ready? Let's go!

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

(and why they aren't true)

Note: here, as in other places in this text-only version, the page numbers refer to the pages in the original, illustrated version of the GENDER book, not the pages in this text document.

[in a green room, Michelle in a skirt and converse sneakers is rummaging through a trunk labeled 'Inherited Beliefs about Gender.' They pull out various thought bubbles from the trunk.]

One of the very first things you and I can do together before we leave this page is to unpack some of our inherited beliefs about gender and examine them for ourselves. After all, before I could even ask, "What is gender?" I had to figure out what gender **isn't**.

(in speech bubble)

hmm.. Some of these don't fit. Garage sale time!

(in thought bubble) **Gender is obvious**

Nope! The only way to be sure you know how someone identifies is to ask them.

(in thought bubble) **Some nonsense about a weaker sex..**

(in thought bubble) **Gender is static**

Your understanding of gender can evolve as you do! see pg. 64 for an example

(in thought bubble) **Some genders are better than others** Nope!

(in thought bubble) **Gender is the same as sex**

No way! Maybe your gender aligns with your sex, but that's not true for everyone. The short answer is that sex is in your body, while gender is in your mind.

see gender versus sex, pg. 16

(in thought bubble) **body parts have gender significance.**

Just because most women have breasts doesn't mean everyone with breasts is a woman (for example), or that a woman without them is any less a woman. The same is true for all body parts and gender identities

(in thought bubble) **Gender bending means you're gay.**

Sure, I can think of a lot of gender nonconformists who are queer, but I can also think of a lot who are straight! Similarly, not all queer folks are gender minorities.
see the birds and the bees, pg. 62

(in thought bubble) **Gender is pink & blue**

Your gender is more than the color of your baby booties - 100 years ago, all infants wore white dresses in the US, and pink was a masculine color.² Just one example of how a culture can shift. See gender in kids, pg. 24

(in thought bubble) **there are only 2 genders: men and women***

This misconception is so common it has its own name- the gender binary. Actually, there are (at least) as many genders as there are cultures, and lots of more helpful ways to think of them than simply masculine and feminine.
see pages 26 and 12

*Not to be confused with another common misconception that there are only two sexes (male and female). See our diverse bodies, pg. 18

(in thought bubble) **The singular "they" is grammatically incorrect**

Though it may sound funny at first if you're not used to it, they/them is absolutely a singular gender neutral pronoun in English. It has been used by Shakespeare and was named by Merriam-Webster as the 2019 word of the year. See gendered language, page 36.

(purple text box) Let's check the assumptions that don't fit with our new information, and see what's left. It seems clear to me that gender isn't simply biology, it isn't the same as your sexuality, and it doesn't matter how you were raised or what surgeries you can afford or how you dress. It isn't static, and it isn't how others see you. Gender can be very complex, but the most important thing about *your* gender is... how you see yourself.

GETTING STARTED

[in an orange room, the book's four creators sit around a table doing research]

(speech bubble) We are 4 white nonbinary drag kings all around the same age living in Texas sitting down to write this book. How can we represent such a diverse, beautiful community?

(speech bubble) Good point, Robin. Let's ask people who don't look like us to share their stories! We can do a survey...

What is Gender?

What is Gender? Earlier we said gender is how you see yourself, but that's not the full story. How is gender different from the other parts of your identity? Well, you know all that boy/girl stuff you learned about growing up? That's how **your culture** defines gender. For me, that looked like pink and blue, dolls and trucks, tutus and ties. They are all expectations about the way you should look and the behaviors and interests you should have if you have a particular kind of body. These change over time and from place to place.

(journal icon)

Can you think of a time when you felt limited by your culture's ideas about your gender?

Your **personal gender** (or gender identity) is where you find yourself in this system. Maybe your body is like other boys' bodies and you see yourself as a boy and you act in the world like other boys; well, that's your gender. There are tons of ways to be a girl or a boy, and tons of options in between and all around these. You don't have to choose. Your gender is where you feel the most comfortable, and it can grow and change just like the rest of you. It can include your understanding of your physical body, your understanding of your inner self, and the way you express that self to the world. They all are facets of your own unique gender!

[word cloud] **Gender is...**

(survey responses)

a set of social agreements

a fluid body of water

fun!

a label

a figment of our imagination

beautiful

a balancing act

a tool used to communicate

a barrier; nothing more

an adventure

a journey of self discovery and self reflection

simultaneously liberating and binding
endless performance
an attitude
a social construct
one facet of a multi-faceted identity

GENDER ASSUMPTIONS

[Grandma is in a museum with 3 statues that depict masculinity, femininity, and femme gender ideals using archetypes of Western art: Michelangelo's David, the Birth of Venus, and Jessica Rabbit.]

A good place for me to continue my gender exploration
was within my own culture and my own expectations about
what it means to be masculine or feminine...

(words scattered around masculine statue)

provider
handsome
leader
strong
brave
Decisive
Aggressive

(words scattered around butch statue)

competent
tough
stone
macho
resilient

(words scattered around feminine statue)

beautiful
passionate
caring
empathetic
sensitive

mysterious
Graceful

(femme statue)
Seductive
Foxy
Fancy
powerful

(in grandma's speech bubble) These are the words and images that first pop into my head when I think about gender.

Where do these ideas come from?
Do I agree with these terms? Do you?

Some folks think these qualities are learned, while others think you are born that way. What's your experience?

SNAPSHOTS OF GENDER

changing throughout time, place, and culture

[a timeline drawn into a history textbook]

The Talmud

The androgynos is in some ways like men, and in other ways like women. In other ways they are like men and women, and in others they are like neither men nor women. -Mishnah Bikkurim 4:1

Ancient Jewish texts recognize 8 different genders!³

"Again, the male is by nature superior, and the female inferior; and the one rules, and the other is ruled; this principle, of necessity, extends to all mankind." - *Politics* Book 1 Section 2
Aristotle 384-322 B.C.E.

Joan D'Arc

1412-1431 C.E.

“Joan defended herself for having put on male clothing again, publicly stating and affirming that [there was] much wrongdoing and outrage against her in prison when she was wearing female clothing...”⁴

“**[W]e have strong energy of both male and female...** [T]raditionally... two-spirited individuals, they were very important and very honored, and they were looked at as messengers from the spirit...”⁵ - Denise Cole, contemporary two spirit individual

“A male child is produced by a greater quantity of male seed, a female child by the prevalence of the female; if both are equal, a third-sex child (napumsa) or boy and girl twins are produced...”⁶ - **Manusmriti** 3.49 circa 100 C.E.

“**At the height of the Classic period**, Maya rulers presented themselves as embodying the entire range of gender possibilities, from male through female, by wearing blended costumes and playing male and female roles in state ceremonies.”⁷ - Rosemary A. Joyce, referring to the Mesoamerican civilization between 250-900 C.E.

(in Rosie the Riveter speech bubble) **We can do it!** Rosie the Riveter became a symbol for women entering the US workforce in greater numbers during World War II.

In **2019** Merriam-Webster announced the singular pronoun “they” as the word of the year, when internet searches for the use of the word increased by 313 percent. The 2018 word of the year was “justice,” and 2017’s was “feminism.”

Also in 2019, the World Health Organization declared that being transgender is not a mental health disorder. United Nations health experts are trying to pave the way for better understanding, more safety, and increased opportunities for gender diverse communities to access health care.⁸

GENDER ACROSS CULTURES

[DJ views a map of the world from the North Pole. On it are labeled many culturally specific genders.]

(in DJ’s speech bubble) We’ve talked about how gender changes over time, and from person to person, but there’s an even larger world of gender out there to explore. Here are a few culturally-specific genders I found in my research.^{9, 10} I challenge you to learn what you can about each of these, or find some others I missed!

(blue text box) Many cultures have words for folks who do not fit neatly into the European concept of the gender binary. These identities (like many aspects of indigenous culture) were often not respected by colonizers and missionaries, but have shown incredible resilience.

Middle East: Khanith from Oman

Asia-Pacific: Fa'afafine (Samoan)

Asia-Pacific: fakaleiti (Tongan)

Asia-Pacific: mahu wahine (Hawaiian)

Asia-Pacific: mahu vahine (Tahitian)

Asia-Pacific: whakawahine (New Zealand Māori)

Asia-Pacific: akava'ine (Cook Islands Māori) from Polynesia.

Asia-Pacific: kathoey of Thailand.

Asia-Pacific: Waria and the Bugis culture of Sulawesi from Indonesia.

Asia-Pacific: bakla (Tagalog), bayot (Cebuano), agi (Ilonggo), bantut (Tausug), binabae, bading [may be considered derogatory] and lakin-on from the Philippines.

Europe: Burrnesha from Balkans.

Europe: Mollies from 18th Century England.

Europe: Uranian from 19th century England

Europe: Femminiello from Neapolitan culture

Africa: Ashtime from Southern Ethiopia

Africa: Mashoga from Kenya

Africa: Mangaiko from Democratic Republic of the Congo

Latin Amer. & the Caribbean: Muxe from Southern Mexico.

Latin Amer. & the Caribbean: Biza'ah from Teotilán

Latin Amer. & the Caribbean: Travestis of Latin America (Brazil)

Latin Amer. & the Caribbean: Guevedoche of the Dominican republic.

North America: wíŋkte of the (North-central US) Lakota

North America: iskwêhkân and napêhkân of the Cree (modern day Canada)

North America: batée of the Crow (modern day Montana, US)

North America: nádleeh of the Navajo (modern day Southwest US)

North America: ikwekaazo, ininiikaazo of the Ojibwe (Near the Great Lakes)

North America: a'yai-kik-ahsi, ninauh-oskitsi-pahpyaki of the Blackfoot (modern day Western Canada/US border)

North America: lhamana of the Zuni (modern day Southwest US)...and many more!

Some of these gender roles are highly regarded, given special status in religious rites or social functions. Others are treated as second-class citizens, and the words describing them may be used very negatively. And that's just the tip of the iceberg: think about how different masculine and feminine gender roles are in each place and time as well! There's a great diversity of genders out there, each influenced by their parent culture.

TWO SPIRIT

There are dozens of different gender identities indigenous to the continent of North America, such as the ikwekaazo of the Ojibwe culture¹¹ or the ninauh-oskitsi-pahpyaki of the Blackfoot tribe¹². Contemporary Native folks may use the words specific to their tribal heritage, and/or the modern pan-Indigenous labels of two-spirit or indigiqueer to describe their gender and/or sexuality.

To learn more about Two-Spiritedness, see gender across cultures on the previous page and Denise Cole's remarks on pg. 11, or check out the book *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature* by Qwo-Li Driskill.

my name is Jessica Gidagaakoons Smith

If you use pronouns, what are they? she/her

How do you identify, gender-wise? Two-Spirit

How do you identify, in other ways? Native American Two-Spirit Bisexual Survivor

How do you experience your gender? I experience being Two-Spirit as being sacred. Prior to colonization Two-Spirit people were the sacred ones. I am reclaiming that sacredness. I experience Two-Spirit as not always being included, we are often forgotten and underserved in many systems. We are invisible within an invisible population. All the work I do is to bring back our sacredness and ensure that we are represented and our voices are heard and honored.

What's one thing you think most people don't "get" about your gender? How being Two-Spirit is a cultural term and that we are spiritual beings. It is often misconstrued and we are looked at as sexual beings. When Two-Spirit people are sacred and spiritual.

How are Two-Spirit people an invisible within an invisible population? Native american people are already invisible in many systems, lack of data, lack of culturally based services, lack of inclusivity. Being Two-Spirit doubles that invisibility because Two-Spirit people are often left out of Native data, and ceremony. So with the data we are lost once for being Native, and twice for being Two-Spirit. We are double oppressed within systems across the country. I am working to change that, and to bring back our visibility.

Anything else we should know? I am a Two-Spirit survivor of domestic abuse, sexual, assault, human trafficking and I use my trauma to uplift survivors and to help our people heal. I use my education to decolonize systems of oppression. I use my voice loudly and nationally because for so long my voice was silenced.

GENDER VS. SEX

[Jamie in a skirt, hoodie, and ponytail is in the style of the Vitruvian Man, representing gender on the left and sex on the right. There is a brain on the left, and DNA strand on the right]

If you were assigned female at birth, were raised as a girl, and now identify as a woman, it would be easy to smush that all together: female (sex) equals woman (gender). For you, that may be true. But for gender diverse and intersex folks, the equation could look different.

Let's get more accurate about the words we use, so our language is honoring and inclusive. The words "male" and "man" are not the same. Gender words like "man" refer to your identity and the expression of that identity (which can include your relationship to your body). Sex words like "male," on the other hand, are labels that refer exclusively to your body.

When the doctor looked at you as a newborn (or before you were born using an ultrasound machine), you were assigned a sex based on your genitals. It turns out, that one piece of information is not enough to tell the story of your body, or even your body's sex parts, which are way more diverse and complicated than a two-option system allows for.

[purple circle] Your **Gender** is informed by your culture and lives in your thoughts, feelings, and preferences. It can be a part of your sense of self and can change over the course of your life (sometimes daily!). You might use words like masculine, feminine, androgynous, gender neutral, or any other term to describe it.

[blue circle] Your **biological sex** is a shorthand way to describe your hormones, genetics, and body parts. It is a condition of your body like your hair color or if you're left-handed. There are a spectrum of sexes with more than two options, and it can change over the course of your life.¹³ Your sex could be described as female, intersex, or male.

A person can have any combination of sex and gender identity. To go back to our previous example, while many folks who were assigned female at birth identify as women, not all do. Some women were incorrectly assigned male at birth, and some folks assigned female at birth are not women.

It may sound complicated (and bodies are!), but all you need to remember is to treat each new person you meet with respect. Unless you are a special kind of doctor or planning on sleeping together, someone else's sex is not your business. We can honor our friends best by embracing the wonderful, unique people they are on the inside.

(on the Gender side)

cultural
feelings
thoughts
preferences
clothing
sense of self
social
identity

(on the sex side)
bodies
hormones
genitals
chromosomes
genetics
DNA

OUR DIVERSE BODIES

Dyadic Male (genitals larger and more external)
Intersex (About 1 in 100 births¹⁴)
Dyadic Female (genitals smaller and more internal)

Hi, Boston! I'm Dr. Williams. You are probably familiar with the stereotypical male and female sexes for humans (these are called dyadic), but scientists have known for a long time that there are way more options than that. We call these intersex, and it's more common than you may think! These are normal and natural conditions and part of the beautiful diversity of human bodies. Just like we have lots of possibilities for hair color, nose shape, or height, we have many variations in sexes, too.

When it comes to our bodies, no two are exactly alike! Genitals are a great example of this. They come in all shapes and sizes and colors. Sometimes there's a medical need for the body's plumbing to be modified surgically at birth. However, doctors will often operate on infants with functioning genitals for no good medical reason - just to make their bodies look "normal." This is terrible because it hurts children, makes lasting changes without consent, and sends a message that their bodies are not okay.

The truth is that all bodies are beautiful. But, your body doesn't define you: you can have any gender identity or sexual orientation with any body type. Our bodies change as we grow, sometimes experiencing characteristics of many sexes at once. Sometimes our relationship with our bodies is part of how we understand our gender. The important thing is to try to be a friend to your body and use words that feel good to you to describe it.

FYI box:

The United Nations released a statement in 2013 condemning forced genital-normalizing surgery, but unfortunately, it still happens.¹⁵ Groups like InterACT are working to help advocate for the human rights of all children.

INTERSEX

[Koomah is in a garden with a snail (Garden snails can mate with any other adult of their species.)]

All bodies are unique. A person who is intersex is usually just born that way due to natural genetic diversity. An intersex person can have any gender or sexual identity, just like a dyadic* person can. There are lots of things a doctor might look at to label someone intersex, and many folks are intersex without even knowing it. Let's learn more.

*Dyadic is the term for a non-intersex person (see previous page)

Genetic Variations

Your genes determine all kinds of things like your eye color, if you have freckles, and your sex. These genes travel on molecules called chromosomes. You might have the famous XX or XY chromosomes (these can be dyadic sexes). Alternatively you could have XXYY, XXY, XO, or XXX chromosomes, or multiple kinds at once (those are considered intersex). Bodies are complex and beautiful. The only way to know your chromosomes is with a special DNA test, so most of the time we won't know what we have.

Examples: Klinefelter's Syndrome and Turner Syndrome

Hormone Variations

All people have communication chemicals like estrogen, testosterone, and progesterone in different levels in their blood, and every body processes them a little differently.¹⁶ That means your hormones are personal to you! Because they affect secondary sex characteristics,

individuals with hormone levels out of the expected ranges or whose bodies react in unique ways to their hormones can be considered intersex.

Examples: Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome and Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia

(in Koomah's speech bubble) "Hi, my name is Koomah! I am an artist and an educator. I want to tell you that Intersex people are just normal people! We aren't deformed and are not defective. Our bodies aren't shameful. These bodies deserve the same respect as anyone else's. They're not scary, they're just different, and that's okay."

F.Y.I... (in snail thought bubble) True hermaphrodites are quite rare outside of animals and plants like me. Today we use the more appropriate and honoring term "intersex" for our human friends.

F.Y.I. (in brown box) While most intersex folks identify as men or women, there are also in-between intersex folks. **Intergender** is a special gender identity which is reserved for intersex folks who don't identify as men/boys or women/girls.

GENDER ON THE BRAIN

[Javier looks at a drawing of the brain, white matter, and a neuron in a text book]

If you can't tell a person's gender by looking at their body, can you find it by looking at their brain?

I did some research, and I found that all brains work about the same, no matter the sex. People of similar sexes or gender identities will tend to have structural things in common (like overall brain size or the shape of their white matter).¹⁷ This is interesting, but these kinds of physical differences don't determine how smart you are, what interests you have, or your favorite color.

So where in the brain does our sense of self live, and what makes our unique identities? That's something neurologists, philosophers, and psychologists are still puzzling over.

European scientists thought they had it figured out once - most women's brains are smaller, so they must be less smart than men. But now we know that the size, weight, and shape of your brain aren't correlated to how intelligent you are. Turns out, folks of every gender and sex have unique smarts, strengths, and superpowers. What are yours?

Curious? Check out gender science on page 107 for more!

IT'S A GIRL! IT'S A BOY!

[Baby in a nursery with pink and blue party decorations]

Even before you're born, people have an expectation of what you'll be like based on your sex. As a newborn, often the first thing that happens is you're wrapped in a pink or blue baby blanket. Your assigned gender is reinforced every time you take a trip down the gendered toy aisles and just about every time your family buys clothes for you. By the time you are a toddler, you already have a sense of your gender identity. Next you get curious about body parts and begin to make a connection in your head between anatomy and gender roles.

Going into your first day of school, you're already pretty good at making decisions about your gender based on examples around you. Kids and grown-ups often reinforce these roles, making comments like, "You can't play with that, that's a girl's toy." At this stage of development, gender rules can be very rigid and limiting. As we get older, we get to examine if that assigned gender makes sense for us, and make our own choices. As adults, it's our job to help create a world where every child feels free to explore and be themselves without fear of bullying.

Pause and Reflect:

What are your earliest memories of your gender?

How has your identity changed since then?

See Youth & Family on page 107 for resources and books on raising gender fabulous kids!

"My 3 year old son has loved pretending to be a girl his whole life.

He loves nail polish, dresses, wigs, and even sometimes asks us to use she/her pronouns for him. But then other times he pretends to be a kitty or a dragon or a million other things too - pretend play is a huge part of investigating yourself and the world at large at this age and I encourage it all! I've read that gender dysphoria isn't a deal in kids until it becomes persistent, insistent, and consistent... So unless I notice it bothering him, I'm happy to just let him play however he wants!" **-Andi**

THE GENDER BINARY & ALTERNATIVE SYSTEMS

is the system of belief in only two genders:

[scene: Maria is standing in front of 3 different bathrooms, men, women, and all genders]

Most public bathrooms, like most driver's licenses and census forms, present us with two options. You're either male or female. In this system, your gender and sex are assumed to be the same thing. However, this doesn't work for gender diverse or intersex folks.

(in orange bubble with pink and blue and purple arrows)

Gender scales are what most psychologists use when measuring gender. In this system, masculinity, femininity, and androgyny are independent traits. You can be high in all these qualities at the same time, low in all, or any combination (and they can all change).

[two-headed arrow with "M" on the left and "F" on the right]

Gender spectrum imagines infinite genders ranging from the very masculine to the very feminine. This gives more than two options, but is still pretty one-dimensional.

[3 overlaid two-headed arrows forming an axis]

Others! Try imagining gender as a 3D space. What would your dimensions be? (journal icon)

(horseshoe with masculine on left and feminine on right) Some see gender as a horseshoe, where the conforming (masculine and feminine) genders have more in common with each other than with the nonconforming possibilities.

Others create colorful gender diagrams. These are all different ways to describe the same concepts. Let's consider how inclusive each system is to gender minorities.

(in Maria's speech bubble) **My friends and I would love a gender system that includes more options than just male and female. Can you imagine that? What might it look like?**

IMAGINE GENDER AS A PLANET

[a planet with a few different colorful continents and a narwhal]

Imagine Gender as a Planet

All people grow up somewhere on that planet, most in the Girly Grasslands or in Boy Bay. Lots of people are comfortable where they're born and stay near that same area their whole lives. Some people, though, are citizens of Manlandia but are born in Ladyland. Just like in the real

world, you can't tell someone's citizenship by looking at them; it's very personal. As we get older we may want to move to a place where we are more comfortable.

Cisgender describes if you're most comfortable in the gender you were assigned at birth.

Transgender Anyone who crosses borders to live outside their assigned gender land could identify as transgender.

(satellite floating outside of the planet) agender

(in purple circle) Each identityland has its own language of pronouns & words specific to the residents.

(in green circle) The borders and the culture of an identityland can change over time.

(in dark green circle with sad face emoticon) Sometimes immigrants are treated as second-class citizens.

(in dark green box) Some genderlands have more resources & power than others.

(in orange square) Some identities are populated entirely by travelers.

Journal Prompts: Which genderland did you grow up in?

What did you like about it and what was hard? Where do you live now?

(in Ladyland)

"female (identified at birth as female)" -Kim C.

femmetopia - "I'm a cislady, masculine female, chapstick femme..." -Tawny

masculine women - "I like dressing in boys clothes, but I don't want to be one." -Mel R.

butch bay

tomboy town

feminine foothills

girly grasslands

women's way

ladylike lake

"I am a woman, not just a trans woman... it hurts when my friends still say he rather than she..."

-Janet

"I am not a proper southern woman." -nataluna

Fjords of femininity

(in the sea of Gender nonconformity)

third gender (island)

Gender Diverse island - "My gender identity is genderful!" -Koomah

(in blue circle) New islands are discovered all the time

(ship) **genderfluid**

(Antarctica) **gender neutral**

(on a boat) "I am proud of what I am doing. Living life authentically takes courage." -Janet

(in Manlandia)

macho mountains

dude delta

Guy town

Brawny bend

(in stickman's speech bubble) I've never questioned that I'm a guy

"I'm Masculine, but not macho" -Kieran

the MANgroves

metrosexual mountains

feminine men - "I'm a gay male who unconsciously developed a nonconforming male gender identity by simply pursuing the things that interested me." -Brad

Dandy-land

Puerile Peninsula - "Just because I'm not the strongest doesn't mean I'm not a man." -Sydney

GENDER IDENTITY

Gender Identity is how you see yourself. It's based on where you feel most at home in the universe of gender possibilities in this moment.

[Boston sits on a couch with a cup of iced tea and a gender board game]

(in Boston's speech bubble) No matter how you play, when you feel comfortable in your own skin, you win!

(rule book)

RULES

#1 There are no rules.

#2 Play as often as you like; sometimes identities change.

#3 You can claim many words, or eschew labels altogether, it's up to you.

#4. This game is just for fun! The real answers are within yourself.

HINT sometimes to find your identity, a little experimentation and self-reflection is required.

(Questions on the game board)
How do you identify?

Start - the doctor said...

It's a girl

> does this still describe me fairly well?

If yes, cisgender (pg. 45)

If no, transgender

it's a boy

> does this still describe me fairly well?

If yes, cisgender (pg 44)

If no, transgender

let's run some more tests > I was socialized as

> If girl, go to "it's a girl" path.

> If boy, go to "it's a boy" path.

> If gender neutral/intergender > Wow, you had cool parents! Fill in your own identity: _____

Transgender

Don't know > Questioning (pg. 61)

It changes > genderfluid (pg. 38)

It's binary > trans man (pg.50) or trans woman (pg. 48)

I'm somewhere in-between > nonbinary (pg. 52) or androgynous (pg. 46) or neutrois (pg. 59)

There are multiple facets to my gender identity >

I identify with two genders = Bigender (pg. 64)

I identify with more than two genders > Multigender (pg. 38)

One is expressed through performance art > Drag Performer (pg. 54)

None of these quite fit or my gender identity is not listed here

> No gender? See Agender pg. 58

> Neat! Fill in your own identity word

My gender is: _____

Your identity is valid!

Does this still describe me fairly well? (arrow to return to start)

GENDER EXPRESSION

[Hunter and Boston are working in an art studio on the porch]

(in Boston's speech bubble) Hey Hunter, what're you working on?

(in Hunter's speech bubble) Oh hey Boston... I was just painting a self-portrait. Wanna see? It's about gender expression: all of the ways I share my gender with the world!

(words on palette)

colors you like

hair cut & style

makeup

clothing

hobbies

job

how you walk

shoes

gestures

vocal pitch

word choice

(in white box) Oh cool, I get it. Gender expression is about the ways I communicate my gender to other people. This includes my short hair, baseball cap, how I don't wear makeup, how I refer to myself, the way I talk, and even the activities I enjoy. Though the specifics change every time I get dressed, I notice I tend to use a consistently masculine palette overall. However, I might present a little differently depending on my mood that day, and the context - you know, whether I'm going to church with my grandma or a party with my friends. But that's just me. How do you wear your gender?

(in purple box) "I only recently started to present to others how I want to be seen as a woman, and I am much happier and [more] confident about myself. I actually don't fear so much anymore how people see me because for once I am who I want to be." -Brenna's survey response

(in red box) "I dress more like a boy (I'm biologically female) and act and speak more like a boy, but am able to switch comfortably into a feminine role when needed." -Bryce's survey response

GENDER PERCEPTION

Journal Prompts: Do you make gender assumptions?
How is your gender seen?

[Boston check out at a grocery store]

(in Jim, the cashier's, speech bubble) Good afternoon um...

(in rainbow from Jim's eyes to Boston)

Haircut & style

Clothing & Accessories

Facial shape, coloring, & hair

Body size & shape

(on white receipt)

The following traits are used to assume a new person's gender:

vocal pitch

motion clues

the way that person walks

eyebrow thickness

facial hair

skin tones

coloring around eyes

coloring of mouth

Sir

80% certainty

see endnote 18 for more on the science of perception!

(in pink box) How closely does your view of yourself align to how others see you?

It's not very darn close at all, and that hurts. Inside...I'm a girly girl, I like pink and fairy tales and don't want to be strong all the time, but I'm typecast by my size and by my gender, and no one bothers to get to know who I really am inside.

-Em's survey response

(in purple box) So I'm constantly putting out these messages that **express** my gender.

Sometimes I'm not even aware of it. But that's only half the story... How those signals are interpreted by others (like Jim here) is their **perception** of my gender.

I find that when my gender is consistently correctly identified by strangers, it's easier to navigate going to the grocery store. But I feel safer* and even more comfortable when others don't assume my gender or pronouns at all (see page 70 on more about how to be an ally).

As a trans person, I regularly have the experience of being misgendered by well-meaning strangers. While this can be very frustrating, I try to remember that how others judge my gender is never as important as how I see myself. It also helps me appreciate the close family and friends who do affirm and respect my gender even more.

(in green box) *Many people suffer slurs and physical harm just because they do not conform to gender roles. The murder of Willie Houston, a cisgender man harassed initially for holding his wife's purse, is a tragic reminder of how intolerance of gender nonconformity affects us all.

(in brown box, pointing to "when my gender is consistently correctly identified by strangers") We sometimes call this "passing"

GENDERED LANGUAGE

[Boston leans against a cube with the pronouns he, she, and they.

Hunter, Naomi, and Alex sit on top of a green box that has more pronoun options on it]

Pronouns are a language's shortcuts used to describe people, places, or things. In English, personal pronouns tend to be gendered, though since the 1800s the pronoun "they" has been used as a gender neutral option for individuals.⁸ Nowadays, we have way more options. You get to choose the pronouns that feel best for you, and respect other people's pronouns in return.

Studies have found that using the correct pronouns for trans youth is an effective means of suicide prevention,¹⁹ plus it's just good manners! Nowadays lots of cisgender folks are putting their pronouns in email signatures and introducing themselves with pronouns to help the trans community feel less alone in their pronoun sharing. You can learn more about how to be an ally on page 70.

(on green box)

pronoun*

she/her/her/hers/herself

he/him/his/his/himself

they/them/their/theirs/themself

(no pronouns)

xe/xem/xyr/xyrs/xemself

e/em/eir/eirs/emself

ze/hir/hir/hirs/hirself

example

She took her power tools.

He left his stuff with his pal.

They are a good friend.

Alex took Alex's dog out.

Xe looked at Xemself in the mirror.

E left eir coffee here.

Ze likes to brush hir teeth.

* in order of popularity based on the 2020 Gender Census. See gendercensus.com to learn more!

MORE Gender Neutral Pronouns

fae, it, phe, thon, ey, ae, ve, ze/zir, zie, ne,
one, sie, ve, tey, yo, co, re, ne, hu, ta, ve

F.Y.I.

I used to have trouble coming up with gender-neutral words to describe folks, especially when I'm trying to be polite to those I haven't been introduced to yet. Here's a tip I found: the gender-neutral equivalent of Mr. or Ms. is Mx. (pronounced like "mix"). Some words you can use to address a mixed-gender group include: friends, colleagues, ya'll, people, or (my favorite), folks!

(in Boston's speech bubble) I used to think these were all the pronouns out there for people, but the more folks I meet, the more I learn. Choosing our own pronouns can be really empowering.

(in Hunter's speech bubble) Hey Naomi, so I never did ask: which pronouns should I use for you?

(in Naomi's speech bubble) I use ze/hir, thanks for asking, friend!

(in Alex's speech bubble) Yeah, it's good to know. Sometimes I feel hurt if people assume my pronouns without asking, you know? It means they don't get me. I rarely mind a polite question about the words I use to describe myself.

try it!

See if you can go 24 hours without assigning gender to strangers with your language. (for example, "That person up there dropped their keys.") It takes practice, but it's the best course of action when you don't know someone's gender identity to not make assumptions. That way you can avoid accidentally misgendering folks.

HOW MANY GENDERS DO YOU HAVE?

Some people don't have a gender (**agender**). Others only experience one gender their whole lives. They are called **unigender**. If you have more than one gender, you may be **multigender**.

These folks (4% of the trans population surveyed)²⁰ have multifaceted gender identities- they either experience multiple genders at once, or experience their genders changing over time.

None (Agender)

One (Unigender)

More than one (Multigender)

- Bigender: two genders
- Trigender: three genders
- Quadgender: four genders
- Polygender: more than four genders
- Pangender: all of the genders (within one's own culture)

Do your Gender(s) change over time?

Everyone's gender evolves slightly over the course of their life, so we can all relate to the experience of change. However, some experience gender as a more dynamic thing. If your gender often changes from one identity to another, you may identify as **genderfluid**. This could go with any of the multigender identities above. If your identity shifts from a stronger gender identity to a more gender-neutral experience, you may prefer the term **genderflux**.

"like there's a target in my body with labels of different gender identities and at random intervals a dart shoots at the target and i change... it's not just because i "haven't decided yet". it's real and it's who i am." –River

"my gender is in constant movement. It changes based off of how I am feeling and what I think feels comfortable in that moment. It took me a very long time (and lots of research) to find a term that was close to how I felt about my gender identity." – Finn

IDENTITY WORDS

While every identity is unique, it can be useful to make categories sometimes to help us find our community. Some questions you may ask yourself are:

Do I have a gender identity? If so, how many?

Is my identity binary or nonbinary? (see pg 26)

Is my identity cisgender or transgender? (see pg 28)

Is my gender expression conforming or nonconforming?

(Speech bubble) You might be intimidated by all these new words... I know I was! So... why all the labels? I think about that quote that says, "the difference between the right word and the almost-right word is the difference between lightning and a lightning bug." Finding (or coming up with) the just-right word to describe ourselves can be really empowering. Fortunately, we don't have to memorize all these terms - there's no quiz! Just remember to approach each new person you meet with a respectful attitude and open heart.

Transgender Is an umbrella term that describes what these different identities have in common: some element of crossing over or challenging gender roles, expressions, or expectations

We call these identities binary because they can still work within a two-gender system: trans man, trans woman, cisgender man, cisgender woman

These identities are nonbinary because a two-gender system does not make room for them: genderqueer, trigender, genderfluid

The transgender umbrella: Transgender is an umbrella term that describes what these different identities have in common: some element of crossing over or challenging gender roles, expressions, or expectations. For example: bigender, nonbinary, trans woman, demiboy, neutrois, and many more!

some folks use multiple gender identity words

Agender

Drag Queens are defined by their nonconforming gender expression. I've met some drag queens who are cisgender men and some who are trans women. See pg 54.

GENDER ACROSS COMMUNITIES

read full-length surveys on pages 72-82!

[a group of people, each holding up signs with descriptions of themselves. Boston introduces the project]

I'm a librarian, so I went to the books first, and then to databases full of articles. But gender is a living thing, so I went right to the source, interviewing over 300 people.

I asked people how they experience gender, today, in their communities.

The answers were as unique as the individuals surveyed, spanning quite a few ethnic, social, racial, and religious backgrounds. Take a look!

Q-roc - I am experiencing gender in the black queer community as a concept that is finally beginning to be understood and respected. My gender identity is not influenced by anyone or anything. Now, my gender expression is constantly being influenced by the positive models of non-oppressive masculinity that I am privileged to encounter.

Elissa - My [social, transgendered, atheist, Arab, Lebanese] culture is pretty conservative on gender and gender roles. I try not to let it influence me, but I love the acceptance and community I get by conforming to the roles. It's so easy for me, yet I'd like to experiment with my appearance and look more. So my community supports me as it restricts me to certain presentations of gender.

fox - web communities [Drupal, tumblr, reddit] help me be comfortable with the fact I hadn't had the stereotypical FTM experience, and many others didn't have that experience either, and it's okay.

KOKUMO - I am a transgender/intersex woman of color. I am an artist and production company executive.

Too many people believe that race and gender have nothing in common. Race dictates gender roles and subsequent expectations.

Emma - I think my [feminist, activist, friendship] community encourages flexibility in my representation of gender.

Furthermore, I feel supported in subverting gender norms in my community, but less so when I venture out of it.

Jac - I grew up and still live in a conservative Midwestern city... My experiences of a lack of community and lack of resources, and being oppressed within these larger systems, make me know how important it is to do more for those coming after me.

Alanna - As much as I would like it to not be so, I find myself bargaining with myself in each different situation. Depending on where I am and who I am with, I present a different shade of gender.

Janet - As a Texan, I know that women are regarded as less than, but as a pagan, I find that women are raised up. As a transwoman I've felt both of those truths.

Mason - my experience of gender in my [Trans, LTBG, Jewish, Legal] communities is constantly evolving.

Jane - MEDICAL - Only islands of acceptance. Even psychologists are divided. CHRISTIAN - Mixed. Still a lot of judgement. POLITICAL - Conservatives need education by fellow conservatives. We habitually shoot ourselves in the foot here. BRIDGE - Mostly accepting.

bast - I'm a bit of a recluse, to be honest. And my communities [Asexual, African American, Polyamorous] don't much affect how I identify, although the asexual bit seems to mesh with it nicely.

Krista - ... I see policing happening in communities that I would not expect. For instance, the lesbian community has been a place where I and the people I love have not felt safe because there has been a lot of body policing and exclusionary spaces.

Dez - Sometimes I have to hide under the pretext of being "male" or "female" for the sake of surviving, and moving through the world with (some) ease. But I'm still me, despite whatever mask I may be forced to hide beneath. And no matter what, I try to be as true to myself as the situation allows.

Aud - in Buddhist teachings there is no gender at the core of everything.

indie - The communities I identify as a member of are: queer, homeless, educational, artist, photographer, chicano(a), feminist... etc.

I experience gender in these communities as: difficult at times, because my lack of gender makes others uncomfortable.

Zuri - My gender is influenced by my community only by the fact that my gender identity is celebrated and not seen as a flaw.

Senorita Cranky Pants - I live in a heavily Armenian community and apparently can be "challenging" to (some people's) ideas of what a proper female should be, and they are very comfortable letting me know that. It has greatly helped me understand the problem of being - not only a gender surfer, but of being anyone having to be different in any way within any community. I'm bothered by this for everyone, not just for gender-folk...

CISGENDER WOMEN AND CISGENDER MEN

A cisgender man (abbreviated as cis man) is someone who was assigned male at birth who currently identifies as a man.

Samir's speech bubble: When my daughter Priya came out to me as trans, it made me really think about my own gender for the first time. I always took it for granted that I was a boy, I did boy stuff. I play cricket and love trucks. I guess I just didn't have to think about it much.

Samir Patel, devoted dad and retired electrical engineer
(arrow to Samir and Rahul) Uses he/him pronouns

Cisgender men sometimes wear a jock and cup while playing sports to protect their external body parts.

Sometimes cisgender men grow breast tissue- this is called gynecomastia- but it doesn't change their gender identity, they are still men.

Cisgender men may take testosterone supplements later in life to help maintain their gender expression and overall health.

Younger folks of this gender identity (like Rahul here) are called cisgender boys. (point to Rahul)

Samir's second speech bubble: I can still feel confused about all these gender things sometimes, but I really want to be a good dad... So I am learning all I can, and apologizing when I accidentally use Priya's old name and pronouns. It's hardest when we're telling old family stories, but with the help of my son Rahul here (who is constantly correcting me), I guess you *can* teach an old dog new tricks!

A cisgender woman is someone who was assigned female at birth who currently identifies as a woman. Abbreviated as "cis woman."

"As a cisgender woman (I use she/her pronouns), I am very aware of discrimination gender minorities face. I make less each year than my husband, even though I outrank him in the department where we both work. This motivates me to work for gender justice for everyone."
—Dr. Amy Chao, feminist and head of surgery (arrow)

Cisgender women sometimes wear special sports bras to support their breasts during physical activity.

Some cisgender women do not have as much breast tissue due to cancer or natural causes- this does not make them any less of a woman.

Many cisgender girls start menstruating when they reach puberty. Special tools exist to help them with this such as cups, tampons, leak-proof underwear, and pads. Dr. Chao would love to

see the packaging on these supplies become more gender-neutral since many different kinds of folks (like transgender boys) also use them.

Some cisgender girls are more masculine, called tomboys- this doesn't mean they will grow up to be gay or trans, though: there is a huge range of possibilities and many grow up to identify as straight cisr women.

Most places in the world, women have different beauty and dress code standards than men- though not all cisgender women choose to follow them. You can be gender nonconforming in your expression (for example, maybe you hate pink, never wear makeup or heels, and love cargo shorts), and still identify as a woman- that's the beauty of having more diverse gender options for everyone!

GENDER NONCONFORMING FOLKS

[3 boxes featuring Pat, Pedro, and Zach G with their pets]

Masculine Women

[Pat is holding a bat and is with a dog]

(in Pat's speech bubble) When I was a kid, people called me a tomboy. I guess in some ways I still am: I don't mind getting dirty, I rarely wear makeup, and I have my own little tractor. FYI: just because I like these things, doesn't mean it's safe to assume I'm a lesbian (or trans!).

Someone who identifies as a woman whose gender expression and presentation happens to fall on the masculine side of the gender spectrum.

see also: tomboy, butch, masculine-of-center, stud, A/G, macha

A masculine woman can be either trans or cis.

You may have heard of... G.I. Jane, k.d. lang, Peppermint Patty, Audre Lorde

Androgynous Persons

[Pedro is reading a book and is with a rat]

(in Pedro's speech bubble) Sometimes when I'm out in public, folks don't know whether to call me ma'am or sir. It doesn't really bother me. I tried for many years to conform one way or the other. Today I'm comfortable letting myself naturally fall in between the M and F ends of the binary.

Androgynous persons: A person of any gender identity whose expression is ambiguous or between the masculine and feminine norms, or a person whose gender expression is about equally high in masculine and feminine qualities.

see also: andro, androgyne

An androgynous person can be either trans or cis.

You may have heard of... Jonathan Van Ness, Ellen, David Bowie, Prince, Rachel Maddow

Feminine Men

[Zach is holding a baby and is with a cat]

(in Zach's speech bubble) I was confused why boys couldn't like the color pink and had to play with trucks and girls couldn't like the color blue and had to play with dolls. I found it all so silly mainly because I liked the color purple and preferred a crayon box to a toolbox at an early age, things that I came to realize were on the outside of the generally accepted and polarized opinion about gender acceptance.

Feminine men: Someone who identifies as a man whose gender expression and presentation tends to fall on the feminine side of the gender spectrum.

see also: dandy, metrosexual

A feminine man can be either trans or cis

you man have heard of... Elton John, Liberace, Captain Jack Sparrow, RuPaul

TRANSGENDER WOMEN

[In this scene, Christina is shown dressed for work and also on her way to a yoga class, talking to Boston]

A transgender woman (abbreviated as trans woman) is someone who was assigned female at birth who currently identifies as a woman.

The terms MTF (short for male-to-female) and "transsexual woman" were used more historically, and still are favored by some. Others prefer "woman of trans experience," or just "woman." It's best to only use the words your friend finds most honoring.

(in Christina's speech bubble) I've known I was a girl since I was young, but only took the steps to live full-time recently, with the support of my community.

My friend is a choir director. He's been helping me with voice lessons.

I guess you could say I dress conservatively. I go to Mass, walk my dog Honeybee, and work as a banker. I have 3 grown kids who make me proud.

(green box pointing to Christina) she & her
(tan box pointing to her dog) enjoys walkies

(family photo) Easter Family Portrait - That's me in the middle!

My Transition Journey

(in brown box) I've been on HRT* for 7 years now, and the physical changes from my estrogen and testosterone-inhibitors are pretty obvious: breast tissue growth, softer skin, and a general redistribution of fat. I take 2 tablets daily.

*HRT is short for hormone replacement therapy

It really hurts my feelings when people use words like tr*nny or she-male or 'it' to describe me. Some of my friends like the term MTF, but that's not a good fit for me. I just use "trans woman" or simply "woman."

(in Christine's speech bubble) I feel very blessed that my family is still in my life. I volunteer for a needle exchange program through my church to support my trans sisters who don't have the same access to healthcare that I enjoy.

My self care routines include regular pedicures, yoga, and laser facial hair removal.

I know surgical transition options aren't right for everyone, but last February, I made the choice to travel to Thailand for my first gender affirmation surgery. It was a bit scary to go under anesthesia, but I was so ready. Even though the healing process was rough, I couldn't be happier with the results.

I've considered other surgeries like implants and facial sculpting, but it's not a high priority for me. I just want to focus on my family right now.

(in Boston's speech bubble) Thanks for sharing! I know medical things are quite personal and often private.

TRANSGENDER MEN

[D.J. is shown working out in his home, with a syringe, and dressed in everyday clothes]

Trans man

(in green box) A transgender man is someone who was assigned female at birth who currently identifies as a man. Some who embrace this identity may pursue social or physical changes such as taking on masculine pronouns, using masculine or androgynous names, or altering their bodies to better express their gender identity.

However, not everyone can or wants to transition- and this doesn't make them any less of a man. Just like with cisgender men, there is a huge diversity of presentations.

My Transition Journey

"Top surgery" is something I'm looking forward to when I can afford it. There are many methods. My insurance won't cover it, so right now I'm saving up and doing some research on gender affirming options.

***Not every trans person wants surgery or hormones.** Your body is your choice. Respect other folks' decisions and privacy around medical stuff.

(in D.J.'s speech bubble) I'm lucky to have grown up in the internet age. Coming from a small town, it was a huge relief to find others like me online, sharing their stories.

I know folks are curious, so I hope by sharing some private medical facts here they won't feel the need to ask me in person.

"Bottom surgery" isn't in my future right now. The options seem a bit limited, though some of my friends have had good results.

(in white box) Testosterone is a hormone that can be injected into a muscle or applied topically via a cream or patch. I've been on T for 8 months now, and I've noticed increased muscle development, my voice has started to drop, and I even have a bit of facial hair coming in!

I used to double up sports bras to **bind**, but these days I use a special compression vest. Elastic bandages can be dangerous.

"Packing" is when I stuff my briefs. Some packers are good for sex, and others help me pee standing up.

They say, "the clothes make the man." I tend to shop in the men's or boy's section. I learned how to sew because it can be hard to find pants that fit.

My pronouns are he, him, his.

(in D.J.'s speech bubble) I work at the grocery store while I'm applying at schools. I want to be a lawyer. I know firsthand how women are treated and want to make a difference.

(by a picture of a soccer team) I was pretty cute in pigtails as a kid! These days it can be hard to find a team where I feel like I can fit in.

NONBINARY IDENTITIES

[Aubrey and Oisín are having a conversation in a blue drawing room]

(in Aubrey's speech bubble) Anyone who has a gender and is not on one of the extreme ends of the gender spectrum (that is, not exclusively or completely a woman/girl or a man/boy) could be described as nonbinary.

(to the left, on a whiteboard)

Aporagender describes any identity that is not masculine, feminine, nor anything in between, but that still has a strong and specific gendered feeling. Neutrois, maverique, and xenogenders are all examples of genders that are better described outside of a masculine/feminine system.

masculine describes a spectrum of genders which are not men, but have some characteristics traditionally associated with men.

feminine describes a spectrum of genders which are not women, but have some characteristics traditionally associated with women.

Boy or man (binary)

Paraboy or paraman

Demiboy or demiman

Libraboy or libraman

Angrogyne

libragirl or librawoman

Demigirl or demiwoman

Paragirl or parawoman

Girl or woman (binary)

Nonbinary (abbreviated as NB, or enby) is an umbrella term organizing many diverse identities. Some identify on a masculine-feminine spectrum, and some are totally different. The possibilities are infinite!

These are just a few of the infinite possibilities for nonbinary identities. You can also look up ambigender (those who identify to some degree with both the masculine and feminine genders), intergender (an identity reserved for intersex individuals), and all of the multigenders on page 38.

Meet more nonbinary folks on pages 73, 75, 76, 91, and 64. Want to learn more? The Nonbinary Wiki (<https://nonbinary.wiki>) is a great source.

(in Oisín's speech bubble) I'm not a woman who stopped using the word "woman," but I'm not "trying to be a man," either. You can't understand me through either approach; I'm something different altogether.

DRAG QUEENS AND DRAG KINGS

[Boston interviews a drag queen backstage and a drag king is performing onstage]

(in Rhonda's speech bubble) I'm Rhonda of the Imperial Court. I'm a drag queen. I use the stage to get in touch with my feminine side.

(in Boston's speech bubble) Wow, that was an amazing show! And great gloves! Thanks for this interview.

(in Rhonda's speech bubble) oh, my pleasure, hun.

Drag is the performance of gender for an audience. It is sometimes silly, sometimes sexy, and most often set to music. Traditionally, drag queens represent a caricature of femininity, while drag kings often represent masculine archetypes. There are also nonbinary performances.

Gendered performances have been used in theater for centuries, and are still a huge part of queer culture today. Drag shows can have several purposes: to raise money for a troupe's top surgery, to help fund the local queer youth groups, to donate to worthy causes like community health services, or simply to show audiences a great time.

(in Clint's speech bubble) Drag is pure MAGIC! It's a perfect way to be a rock star one song at a time! AND we get to create safe, nonbinary spaces to help audiences and performers alike see gender as fluid and fun! -Clint Torres

(green box) The dressing room is where transformation happens and art unfolds. Finding characters' personas and mannerisms in the clothes, hair, make-up, packing, facial hair pasting, tucking, and binding process can build esteem for kings and queens. The stage can offer a freedom of expression performers may not experience in their everyday life. Besides giving us a venue to find our voices, it can be a welcomed revenue generator.

Along with being fun and campy, drag can also be a form of activism where gender artists raise questions about identity, power, desire, and privilege. Remember, not all drag stars are transgender- some just love the stage!

-Pedro Asty AKA Pasty Pamplermousse

(in tan box) A lot of what makes me "me" is my drag persona Freddy Prinze Charming. Freddy is award-winning and nationally recognized. I'm well traveled, well read and well spoken. I'm currently monogamously coupled with a fantastic woman, with 2 amazing boys who have accepted me (and Freddy) into their lives. I'm a performer, an entertainer and an artist.

-Freddy Prinze Charming or JC

(in thought bubble of audience member) Wow, drag is dazzling!

CROSSDRESSERS

[this scene takes place in a closet (a literal closet)]

(next to photo of Jane) "As a crossdresser, I have a true gender gift, the ability to live and relate comfortably in both the masculine and feminine worlds. That is how I chose my femme name, which means 'gift from God.'" -Jane

F.Y.I...

The term "transvestite" means *one whose clothing crosses boundaries* in Latin. The word was originally coined by Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld in Berlin at his revolutionary Institute for Sexual Research. That facility was later raided by Nazi forces, and since then, "transvestite" has fallen out of popular use and is often used as a slur. You can honor your friends by referring to them with whatever name, words, and pronouns they are using for themselves at that moment. When in doubt, ask!

(in Boston's speech bubble) Hmm.. How are crossdressers different from the drag stars from the previous page? Could I be both? [Journal prompt]

(in the closet) There are many reasons why someone might like to wear the clothing typical of another gender from time to time (or all the time). Some folks do it for fun. Others use it to step into otherwise forbidden social roles, to explore new or different identities, or just to shake things up. There's probably as many reasons as there are people who do it!

Because this is all about a gender expression, it's important to remember that not all crossdressers are trans.

My friend Jane explained to me that for her, crossdressing is an essential way to express a part of her self. Some people feel expressed just at home privately, while others dare to go out dressed in the world. No matter what works for you, remember how you look doesn't need to define who you are.

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO NOT HAVE A GENDER?

[below the agender flag are 4 individuals facing the flag, sharing their stories]

It's easy to imagine a drawing without color, but for those of us who have always had a gender identity, it can be hard to imagine what it's like to not have one. I met a bunch of folks, and each person's story is unique.

Agender is an identity which has lots of meanings: it can be used when you have no gender identity, but it can also be used to mean gender-neutral or having an undefinable gender, or not having strong feelings about your gender.

Neutrois is when you have a gender that is neutral (i.e. low in both masculine and feminine traits, as opposed to androgynous, which is high in both).

Greygender is when you don't have strong feelings toward your gender or lack of gender.

How would your life be different if all the rest of your identities were the same, but you didn't have a strong internal sense of your own gender, or that feeling was strongly

neutral? How would you navigate dating and clothes shopping, and other experiences that are often heavily gendered?

“People don't realize I identify as agender. Since my gender expression is male, people lump identity and expression in the same boat, and since I 'look' male, therefore I am.”
– Torsten

“Gender is more than a continuum from male to female, it is also a spectrum of how gendered you are/how much gender you have, and there are genders that don't fit in that scale at all.” – Dax

“I have yet to feel womanly. But I don't feel like a man either. To describe it best, I feel like a young boy--an individual that is not yet distinctly feminine or masculine.” – Lorena

YOUR IDENTITY IS VALID!

[a sun, a rainbow, a book, a cloud, and a clipboard on a blue background]

We affirm that labels are starting points for further conversation. A single word can never encapsulate a whole person, and there are many who don't use or like gender labels at all. That is ok! You probably have lots of intersecting identities that only scratch the surface of who you are. Gender is one part - what are some others?

No matter how you identify, you are the expert on your own self. Even if nobody else sees or understands you yet, we honor the courage it takes you to be yourself and salute you on your gender journey, wherever that may take you.

Questioning?

Cool! That is a perfectly legitimate identity as well. Take your time, explore yourself through journaling, reflection, and experimentation. You may come to an identity (or several), or you may stay a gender explorer. Both are great options!

Because paper books are limited and there are infinite possibilities of gender, we are sure we have left many identities out. If you haven't found your identity words in this book yet, we empower you to write in your own!

[on the clipboard] My gender identity is: _____

THE BIRDS & THE BEES

where gender intersects sex and sexuality

[outside in the treetops and on a wire, birds and bees are flying around

How do you identify?

Your gender and your romantic and sexual identities are different but related parts of your self. Gender is one of many qualities you might use to select dates, so in that way, they're connected. But it doesn't end there! Your gender can be an important factor in understanding your sexual identity. For example, if you are a man (regardless of the sex assigned to you at birth) who is mostly attracted to women, you might identify as straight or heterosexual. If you feel that same attraction to women and you are a woman yourself, you may identify as a lesbian. However, you may prefer a different term. Just like with gender, we all get to decide which words feel right to describe ourselves.

How does it work?

No matter how you identify, there's lots of ways to express your affection. You don't have to feel confined by your gender or your body, because there's not just one way to get it on. What works best for your body and gender identity are specific to you, and sometimes best explored solo until you feel safe and comfortable sharing it with another person. Sexuality can be less fun when gender stereotypes get in the way: when we are told boys can't be receptive or girls can't take charge. So keep an open mind, ask what names your partners might like for their parts, and understand some parts may be off-limits. As always, ask for permission, communicate respectfully, and make a safer sex plan that works for you to reduce your risk for sexually transmitted infections - they can travel between all kinds of bodies. Oh yeah, and have fun!

(in a bird's nest) **a note on possibilities...**

anyone of any gender can be attracted to anyone else of any gender(s)

anyone of any gender can be anywhere from asexual to very sexual

anyone of any gender can have as many partners as they like, including zero!

"sex, gender, and orientation are all fluid entities capable of ranges of expression & emotion."
-Andi

(two birds on a wire) We're a straight couple. One of us just happens to be transgender.

I am panromantic (gender does not factor into my attraction) and asexual (my ideal relationship doesn't include sex).

My sexuality changes over time

"I am a human-sexual" -Christyna

"I'm just starting to experience how my gender is unrelated to my sexual orientation, when for so long they were linked..." -Sean

"I am a pangender, pansexual student" -Sincerity

"Gender is not too much of an issue. What matters is that we see each and every person as a singular beautiful individual with the potential to love and be loved" -Kay

"I think people should let others self-identify about everything... and not put them in a box"
-Amanda

(in Boston's speech bubble) wow, such diversity! everyone's unique.

EXAMPLE LIFE TIMELINE

a true story!

[a photo album featuring Alexis. At the bottom Alexis and Boston are having a conversation]

Your name: Alexis (at this time... but it has been Debbie, Art, Jasper, Monique, and Shenoa and sometimes it still might be any of those)

Your gender identity/identities: Gender fluid or possibly bi-gender seems to describe it best at this time but it has changed over time... I haven't changed, just the terms we use. Until the gender fluid term showed up, nothing really seemed to fit.

(a baby photo and under it reads 1948)

I was born in 1948 in a small town in Southern Illinois. During the 50's (especially after 1955 when we got our first TV) the norm for gender was quite clear. Boys did one set of things, girls did another set of things. Boys wore pants and suits; girls wore skirts, heels, and hose and jeans. (Jeans were OK for a girl, but other pants were not. Go figure... The way one weaves the cotton makes it acceptable or not acceptable.) Some days I felt like I was a girl, some days I felt more like a boy... it is still that way.

1962: early years

I was 14 years old and bullying pushed me to try to be someone other than myself which resulted in my one purge (I threw all my girl things in the trash). Doing that... denying myself... hurt much more than the bullying. When I went to school the following week, I no longer cared what happened to me. When I was attacked, I fought back.

I went in for my mandatory therapist meeting... Explained how I felt being away from home... Explained that I sometimes felt like a girl and when I did, I dressed like a girl. He said, "There is nothing wrong with that. You need to be whoever you are. If this starts to bother you, then you should come back and see me so we can talk about it." He went on to explain that I was a transvestite... That turned out to be much less traumatic than I expected so I was good to go for the next four years.

(drawing of Alexis in cap and gown in 1966, Purdue)

(photo of Alexis in 1980)

(in Alexis' speech bubble) I think the things that I remember best and enjoy the best are times that I have been truly accepted for who I am. I can't tell you the number of times that I have been at a party or in a store shopping or at an event and I realize that I'm hanging out with the women and being taken totally as a female person... frequently I'm not even in girl mode.

Thinking about the future is both scary and exciting... Guess I will just do my best to make it fun!

(in Boston's speech bubble) wow, Alexis, thank you so much for your responses.

WALK IN OUR SHOES

[Regina is in a purple room surrounded by thought bubbles]

Let's try a thought experiment! Imagine you are a gender that you are not. If you're a cis boy, what would it be like to be a cis girl? If you're a trans man, what would it be like to be agender? Then take some time thinking through how these parts of your life might be different.

Start!

(in banners above a crib) It's a boy! It's a girl!

Self-Discovery

When did you realize your gender? Were there any hurdles to overcome to find yourself?

Family

Will your family treat you differently in your new gender? How does it change your relationships?

Legal Concerns

Do your legal documents all match? How would you correct them (if needed)?

Coming out

Do you need to tell folks? How would you do it?

Names and Pronouns

How will you decide? Who will you tell first?

School

Which dorms will you stay in? Will you feel comfortable in an all-girls (or boys) school?

Assumption Alley

What might people guess about you based on your gender presentation? Are those correct?

Jobs

Does your different gender open doors for you in employment? Are some jobs now harder to do or to get into as your new gender?

Religion

Can you take on different roles in your spiritual community? Will you feel welcome?

Relationships

is there a reveal to be made to new love interests in your new gender? Does your new gender change your sexuality?

Jail

Could your new gender put you in trouble with the authorities where you live?

Psychology

how do you feel in your new gender? How might you process the changes?

Healthcare

Do you have to come out to your doctors? Would you need changes to feel comfortable in your body?

Mortality Risk

Do you have friends who have died because of their similar gender? Does your new gender put you in a higher risk category for disease, violence, or suicide? Why or why not?
tgdoor.org

Public Spaces

Does your new gender affect the way you move through public spaces? Do you feel more or less safe?

Self-Acceptance

Do you struggle with internal feelings of worth in this gender?

Social Acceptance

How often do you experience harassment, violence, or discrimination based on your new gender?

Self-Actualization

What obstacles do you have to overcome to be your truest self in this gender?

[journal icon] How did this thought experiment make you feel? Find any new insights?

[a board game map navigating some common life experiences]

Here are some facts and survey responses to help you continue your gender thought experiment.

Start!

(in banners above a crib) It's a boy! It's a girl!

Self-Discovery

Children assert their gender identities by the time they begin to talk.²¹

Family

Gender nonconforming kids with accepting parents are 52% less likely to suffer depression and 53% less likely to attempt suicide.¹⁹

Legal Concerns

It can be expensive and time consuming for trans folks to make sure their names and gender markers are correct on all documents. See page 106 for free resources.

Coming Out

Coming out can strengthen relationships with trust and honesty, or it can put them in danger where there is misunderstanding and ignorance.

Names and Pronouns

Some folks try on new names by using them online or at cafes.

School

When kids get bullied, it's often because they are not meeting some gender norm

Assumption Alley

“People assume that if I say I am a trans woman, then that means I am like the drag queens they see on TV” - Survey

Jobs

In one study, transgender people were four times more likely to report incomes at or below the poverty level, despite having levels of education significantly higher than the general population.²²

Religion

Some faiths have really strict guidelines about gender roles. Gender nonconforming people may or may not feel safe or accepted. On the other hand, some religions are now voicing in their mission that they accept all beings.

Relationships

“I am blessed to share a home and a blissful romantic life with my best friend, closest ally and fiercest lover. Together we are redefining life, love and community for ourselves and those around us.” - Krista

Jail

It is still illegal to crossdress in some places.²³

Psychology

“[I had] medication anxiety shame about being trans” - survey

Doctors

Depending on where you live, access to medical services can be tricky. More than half of North America’s transgender population lives with unmet health needs²⁴

Mortality Risks

Suicide attempt rates among trans folks are higher than in the overall population (41% vs. 1.6%).²² Injustice and lack of social acceptance are the primary causes. Unfortunately, trans folks (particularly women of color) are often targets of transphobic violence as well.²⁵ search the web for “transgender day of remembrance and resilience” for an annual gathering near you.

Public Spaces

“I always use the Family or Unisex bathroom to avoid any problems with picking which restroom to go in to and in some states it helps me not break the law.”

Self-Acceptance

“It has taken all I have to transition and to love myself...

Social Acceptance

...but sometimes if I have to explain myself one more time to another person I don't think I will leave my house" - Kokomo

Self-Actualization

"Anyone that is transgender... I would want to be your friend.. because those are people who have really had to deal with life each step of the way and are very transformed in their thinking..." - Scott

HOW TO BE AN ALLY

to the transgender community

ally - someone who supports the rights of other groups of people.

[the trans symbol is in the middle, and there are notebooks open on the page]

"First, do no harm."

Nobody likes accidentally hurting someone's feelings. Here are some simple things you can do to make sure you are respecting the people around you. Check your assumptions & consider the following common courtesy guidelines:

Refer to someone as the gender they are most presenting in that moment, or gender-neutrally using their chosen name, until you can...

politely ascertain the properly gendered (or ungendered) language the person prefers.

It's okay to politely ask for the person's preferred pronouns, assuming pronouns can be hurtful...

it is never polite to ask strangers about their genitals or medications or surgeries, because...

some things are private, and that's okay. Respect that.

Be mindful that not all trans people are out, respect the privacy of your friend's personal history.

Remember...

not everyone is available as an encyclopedia of answers for your curiosity; ask first. And...

if you've made a mistake in your assumptions or language, apologize and move on, always making the effort to respect their identity first and foremost in your interactions.

Thanks!

Be a great friend to trans folks!

Make positive change, if the other things come easy or you happen to find yourself in a position of power in our society. These are what make a real advocate:

Do the basic considerate stuff, consistently. Be kind.
Never stop learning, and share what you know
Don't tolerate disrespectful jokes or insensitive language.
Support political action that increases awareness of and protects the rights and safety of folks who are marginalized.

"I'm learning as I go about the people around me - always asking as necessary. Remembering to use proper pronouns is still difficult, but I do believe it is necessary." -Helen R.

FULL SURVEYS

These are just a handful of the over 300 surveys we collected while writing this book as part of our research process. We used many quotes from the surveys throughout the book, but thought it would be nice to include some full and unedited responses as well, so you can meet more gender fabulous folks. Visit www.thegenderbook.com/survey-results to read them all!

my name is Justin

If you use pronouns, what are they? He or They

How do you identify, gender-wise? Bigender, genderfluid, non-binary, male (Learn more about this gender on page 38)

How do you identify, in other ways? Queer, working class/first generation to college

How do you experience your gender? Learn more about myself every day.

Gender-expansive!

What's one thing you think most people don't "get" about your gender? Gender is fun.

Gender is being seen. Gender is personal. Gender is to be shared.

What gives you hope? All the queer youth that are learning to navigate the world today.

my name is Ro

If you use pronouns, what are they? he/him or they/them

How do you identify, gender-wise? demiboy, transmasculine, masculine of center, genderqueer (Learn more about this gender on page 52)

How do you identify, in other ways? queer, asexual, Chinese American, middle class, college educated, mentally ill, agnostic

How do you experience your gender? It's been a long journey of trying to find myself, and it's not over. I've tried several different gender identity labels, but the four that I currently use fit me best, for now. I know for sure that I am not cis, but I don't know yet if I am non-binary or a transman, or maybe somewhere in between. I can relate to a lot of trans experiences, though I have been in denial and tried to conform to my assigned gender for years. I experience gender dysphoria and plan on medically transitioning someday to alleviate that. Still, I am happy with

the things that I have done to transition so far, such as changing my legal name, pronouns, hair, and clothes.

What's one thing you think most people don't "get" about your gender? I don't need to have known since I was a toddler to be trans, and I don't need to conform to the stereotypes of the gender I am transitioning to, either. I can have a masculine gender identity and still have "feminine" interests like arts and crafts. I am a demiboy not because of my interests, but because demiboy is how I understand myself and how I want to be seen. Also, gender is a very complicated thing that varies from person to person. No two people experience it the same way, and that is valid.

How would you present yourself if everyone would be completely accepting?

I would dress like how I customize my characters in video games, which is whatever I think looks cool. I would act the same as I do with my closest friends, which is more confident and bold than how I usually act.

my name is Catie

If you use pronouns, what are they? she/they

How do you identify, gender-wise? Intersex/Non conforming female

How do you identify, in other ways? Filipino, Italian, Autistic

How do you experience your gender? I don't feel fully "female" stereotypically and have ALWAYS loved 'masculine' things, things meant for guys supposedly. Many of my friends are dudes and I feel more connected with masc things.

What's one thing you think most people don't "get" about your gender? It's "not real" because it's fake or others identify as cis, or it's basically "nonbinary" because of the name or what I feel inside due to what I know

How do you approach haters or ignorance about gender? Especially yours?

Sad as it is I usually don't TELL people about it, as I present enough as a cis female to pass. And it fits my ID as well.

Anything else we should know? I love penguins, video games, and am going to school for Computer Science.

[in purple oval] Learn more about intersex folks on page 20

my name is Jules

If you use pronouns, what are they? they/them

How do you identify, gender-wise? gender fluid nonbinary (but also ID with the terms genderflux and genderqueer)

How do you identify, in other ways? Latinx, self-diagnosed Autism (for now, looking to see a professional), spiritual, queer, immigrant,

How do you experience your gender? I experience my gender as a feeling about how I relate to social gender norms and the social constructs of masculinity and femininity - specifically, I feel no attachment to either binary gender and fluctuate between different nonbinary identities, sometimes feeling more masculine or more femme but never feeling like a "man" or a "woman"

What's one thing you think most people don't "get" about your gender? How I have breasts that I am not removing but am not a woman - I don't want top surgery and have a large chest but binding on masc days is enough to squash my dysphoria, at least for now. People associate secondary sex characteristics with gender but that assumption is wrong for me

What makes you gender euphoric?

When people refer to me by neutral terms (y'all, friend, partner, child, sibling) and use my pronouns (they/them) correctly (or correct themselves quickly without making a fuss)

Anything else we should know? "I'm 22 years old, a university psychology student who hopes to apply to medicine in the fall. I want to work as a endocrinologist to provide care too trans and nonbinary people within my community

I have 5 pets (cats are Casper, Sparkles, and Daisy; dogs are Gemma and Boo) I love brownies, reading, and unicorns "

[surveys on notebook paper]

my name is Mel Hill

I describe my gender identity as genderqueer, transmasculine, drag king, boy

my pronouns are he or they, please

I think gender is... interesting. a puzzle. always changing

The communities I'm a part of are mostly the queer, drag, and bay area communities

I experience gender in my communities as queers are imperfect but open to education, drag is amazing and accepting, and the bay area in general is pretty different from back home Texas!

What I think people don't realize is There's male, there's female, and there's also all of this in-between no-mans-land. That's the area I'm interested in. Making space in between the two and outside the two so folks can be free to be however they are most comfortable being.

The question I would have on this survey is What is your favorite ice cream topping?

My answer to that question is m&ms, because they make pretty rainbow swirls as you lick it.

[in green oval] See nonbinary identities on page 52 and drag kings on page 55 for more!

my name is Carroll

I describe my gender identity as feminine

my pronouns are she/her

I think gender is... personal and only given labels to help others understand us.

The communities I'm a part of are the Body of Christ as a whole, a specific church, my family (immediate/extended), some very supportive friends, recovery-oriented mental health community

I experience gender in my communities as heavily influenced by those I'm around. The more open and loving the people I'm around are, the more open and free I feel to be my true self. I experience gender in its glorious spectrum on a regular basis, but it is rare to be around others who are open to the gender spectrum idea where I live.

What I think people don't realize is that even cisgender people (like me) have to go through a discovery process with themselves. I struggled for years to figure out what my gender identity really means to me, and have only recently began getting comfortable with who I believe I truly am. I felt so much pressure to act and portray myself as a tough tomboy that I was uncomfortable being a "girl." It has been a hard and lonely road, even though it turns out I do not identify as queer. I think, in general, there is too much assumption about who is going to experience what struggles in their lives. Gender identity struggles can occur across the board.

The question I would have on this survey is When and how did you learn about the gender spectrum?

My answer to that question is that I learned about the gender spectrum "idea" (vs. the gender binary) a few months ago from a good friend of mine who identifies as an androgyne. They explained their life in the queer community to me, the importance of proper pronoun usage, and the basic theory of the gender spectrum. It's been great having them as a friend and a resource to learn about the LGBTQIA* community!

[arrow to cisgender] See page 46 for more on this gender

my name is Jac

I describe my gender identity as butch

my pronouns are she, her, hers

I think gender is... stupid

The communities I'm a part of are People who watch anime, play video games and read webcomics, and spend too much time on the internet

I experience gender in my communities as A form of protest

What I think people don't realize is that someone's presentation doesn't necessarily always reflect their gender identity for various reasons.

The question I would have on this survey is The gender I was assigned at birth is...

My answer to that question is male

my name is Mom

I describe my gender identity as female

my pronouns are her/she/boss

The communities I'm a part of are Baptist/teacher/yaya/wife/jeweler, mother of gender variant individual

I experience gender in my communities as "I am who I am. I am accepting of other's differences and similarities. I've been told that I am an open-minded, liberal, conservative by my kid."

What I think people don't realize is God made each of us just the way he wants us.

The question I would have on this survey is How do I build a new relationship with my daughter who is considering transitioning to a son? How do I refer to this child of mine that I have always proudly called my daughter? I'm no less proud -- just a little confused.

My answer to that question is First and foremost - this is still my child that I love. I'll learn how to accept and deal with the rest.

my name is Nicole

I describe my gender identity as Femme trans woman

my pronouns are she and her

I think gender is... fun to play with!

The communities I'm a part of are White, American, lesbian, trans, athletic, geeky

I experience gender in my communities as a variable that I change consciously and subconsciously depending on where and when I am and my mood. I enjoy being more butch and sporty at times while others I prefer being more femme and stylish.

What I think people don't realize is that you can be your gender however you want.

The question I would have on this survey is What item do you think best represents your gender and why? (Clothes, story, song, etc)

My answer to that question is My bike, it is sport and butch in some ways while also stylish and femme in others. And parts can be changed to suit my needs.

my name is Col

I describe my gender identity as Soft butch or AG Femme.

my pronouns are She, Her.

I think gender is... what you feel inside and how you choose to portray it to the world.

The communities I'm a part of are art and cultural community, alternative music community, the lesbian community, and sometimes the black community.

I experience gender in my communities as I feel like in my community that there is too much pressure to become this overly successful and rich woman to be noticed in a man's world. I don't feel like I have to become rich to be noticed, I think I just have to be me.

What I think people don't realize is that at the end of the day it's you who decides who or what you are, and that no amount of hate or ignorance is going to change that.

The question I would have on this survey is When did you decide to accept who you are?

My answer to that question is When I got sick of everyone telling me who I am.

my name is Zander

If you use pronouns, which ones? He/Him

How do you identify, gender-wise?
Man of transsexual experience.

How do you identify, in other ways?
Husband (of nearly 18yrs), Latino, First-generation Mexican-American, gang member to Military Veteran, special education student and high school drop out to college graduate and Licensed Clinical Social Worker, an atheist who went to seminary to learn about the faith and doctrine of majority world religions, for group home kid to stable professional adult.

How do you experience your gender?
Like a second skin, feels so natural.

What's one thing you think most people don't "get" about your gender?
My masculinity is natural, there's no "performance" aspect present. Being a "binary" guy is my authentic expression. I was a very masculine dyke pre-transition, so I'm very comfortable living in a man's body

Anything else you'd like us to know?
The National Association of Social Workers selected me as the 2020 National Social Worker of the Year!!

Fill out the Survey!

[on college-ruled paper with a pencil]

my name is

If you use pronouns, which ones?

How do you identify, gender-wise?

How do you identify, in other ways?

Fill in the blank: gender is...

How do you experience your gender?

What's one thing you think most people don't "get" about your gender?

The question I would have on this survey is:

My answer to that question is:

Anything else you'd like us to know?

[journal icon] These are the same questions we asked over 300 people to answer to help build this book. What would you say?

YOUR BONUS BOOKLET

Step 1

Carefully cut out the next 3 pages and make as many double-sided copies as you want!

Step 2

Fold in half. You can also sew or staple down the middle for bonus points.

Step 3

Share it with your friends and family!

[the GENDER booklet goes here. It's a 6-page version of the most essential concepts of the book. You can download yours at www.thegenderbook.com/booklet]

the GENDER book(let)

By Hunter Rook

Gender (n) a complex topic worth exploring. Gender education may lead to gender freedom and fun.

Thegenderbook.com

creators@thegenderbook.com

This booklet is a mini version of the full gender book, which you can read for free online at thegenderbook.com Feel free to make as many copies as you'd like and share this widely.

FYI: They/them pronouns are grammatically correct. Just ask the dictionary. You use them just like this: they took their dog to the park.

Welcome to the world of gender!

Thanks for taking the time to educate yourself. Learning new stuff can be intimidating if you grew up in a culture that enforces strict gender guidelines. But you may find more freedom to express yourself and make new friends in the process. Here's what you need to know to get started:

Gender is personal

Gender is a part of many people's identities. It's influenced by the culture you grew up in. Everyone decides their own identity that feels right to them. Gender is an important aspect to many people's sense of self, but you can't see it by looking at someone. Gender can be deeply personal and complex- like knowing what religion someone is or their cultural heritage. Here are the three basic components of gender:

Gender Identity: how you see your own gender

Gender Expression: how you show your gender to the world

Gender Perception: how others interpret your gender

How do you share your gender with the world?

Gender is not the same thing as biological sex

If you were assigned female at birth, were raised as a girl, and now identify as a woman, it would be easy to smush that all together: female equals woman. For you, that may be true. But for gender minorities and intersex folks, the equation could look different.

A person can have any combination of biological sex and gender identity. While many folks who were assigned female at birth identify as women, not all do.

Your **Biological sex** is a shorthand to describe your hormones, chromosomes, and body parts. It is determined by a combination of genetics and hormones. It is a condition of your body like your hair color or if you're left-handed. Your sex can be: male, female, intersex.

Your **Gender identity** is informed by your culture, and lives in your thoughts, feelings, and preferences. It is a part of your sense of self and can change over the course of your life.

Imagine gender as a planet

Most of us were raised in the Girly Grasslands or the Boy Bay. But just like in the real world, sometimes we travel and find our true home lies somewhere other than where we happened to be born.

Cisgender: someone assigned male at birth who identifies as a boy/man OR someone assigned female at birth who identifies as a girl/woman. Abbreviated as "cis"

Transgender: could describe anyone who is not cisgender. Often a transgender person's identity has some element of crossing over or challenging binary gender roles or expectations. Abbreviated as "trans"

Each person gets to choose the identity words that fit best for themselves.

There are many genders!

If gender is like a planet, there's not just two options of places to live on it. And even within the continent of Manlandia, there are a great diversity of gender options. I wouldn't say my soft-spoken accountant Mr. Perry J. Winkle Jr. has the same gender as Buck Steele, the macho-man cowboy. Would you?

Here are some gender possibilities:

girl a youthful feminine gender identity

boy a youthful masculine gender identity

man a grown up masculine gender identity

woman a grown up feminine gender identity

nonbinary anyone who does not identify 100% as one of the above 100% of the time

androgynous a person high in masculine and feminine traits

neutrois a person low in both masculine and feminine traits

(and there are many, many more!)

You might not have a gender, or you may have many facets of your gender identity

Everyone decides their own identity words that feel right. Some people choose to not use gender words at all, while others embrace multiple words to describe themselves. It's totally valid also to be questioning and still exploring your gender. Where do you fall?

Hi, my name is ____ and I identify as _____.

Agender no or undefined gender identity

Unigender one relatively stable gender identity that doesn't change much over time

Multigender many aspects to your gender identity that change over time or co-occur at the same time (i.e. bigender, polygender, genderfluid, genderflux, etc).

My name is _____

My pronouns are _____

My gender identity is _____

My gender expression is

Masculine (low to high)

Feminine (low to high)

Other (low to high)

Does my identity change?

Draw yourself!

How do I be a good friend to trans folks?

Ask strangers how they would like you to refer to them, it's rude to make assumptions about other people's genders.

Practice using the correct gendered language for your friends in private so you can get it right.

When you do make a mistake, correct yourself and move on quickly.

Let your friend be the one to bring up body parts or medical plans, it is usually private.

Advocate for the rights and safety of gender minorities, and donate your time and energy to political causes.

Speak out if you overhear disrespectful jokes, gender bullying, or insensitive language.

Share your pronouns (such as in your email signature or when you introduce yourself) if you are cisgender. It helps normalize the sharing of pronouns for trans folks.

Never stop learning! Educating yourself and others is a wonderful way you can advance gender freedom for everyone.

This booklet is a mini version of the full gender book, which you can read for free online at thegenderbook.com. While you're there, you can purchase a beautiful hardback copy to donate to your local school or library, or get one for yourself to leave on your coffee table as a colorful conversation starter. Feel free to make copies and share this widely.

Education is for sharing. Pass it on!

ABOUT THE CREATORS

[sketches of Hunter, Jay, and Robin]

All creators are also skilled public speakers and would love to talk to your class, office, or group about gender! email us for rates & details! creators@thegenderbook.com

Hunter Rook

illustrator & primary author

Hunter is a white, queer, Southern trans masculine guy who loves making stuff, hanging out in the woods, and husky dogs. He has an art degree from Rice University, and he does all the book design and drawings for the GENDER book in between freelance web and graphic design jobs. Hunter also works on the book's content, words, and creative vision and loves teaching. Learn more about his work or get in touch at rowdyferretdesign.com

Jay Mays

co-author & chief editor

Originally from Texas, Jay is a white, genderfluid health care advocate with a passion for safe-space-building, training, and trans peer support. With a creative writing degree from the University of Houston, Jay also loves staying engaged with the arts community as an editor, producer, theater artist, and writer. Collaborating on the GENDER book has been one of Jay's proudest accomplishments. Jay is also a home chef, a dog parent, and an aspiring Jeopardy contestant.

Robin Mack

community relations

Robin has been managing several colorful hats for the project including marketing, community involvement, and book distribution. Robin is thankful for all the years they have spent being a massage therapist and yoga instructor for all communities. Robin has especially enjoyed being on the board of the Transgender Foundation of America. Here's to more people being expressed!

WRITE IN THIS BOOK!

[red page with a few games and a coloring area]

(in notebook)

make your own gender games

try on a hat made for a differently gendered person

write a poem about your gender

act in a skit like a macho man

Draw yourself as a gender superhero

Practice using ze/hir pronouns on your kitty

write a story about someone of a different gender

dress up girly for a day!

(coloring area) write your dream for gender justice in the cloud

(in cloud) I wish...

color the rainbow awesome!

(maze) Help!

Our friend Boston can't find the gender-neutral bathroom at the museum. Can you help?

What are some reasons differently gendered folks might prefer a single-stall or unisex bathrooms? Hint: 59% have avoided bathrooms in the last year because they feared confrontations in public restrooms at work, at school, or in other places.¹⁹

(by the female bathroom sign) Are you in the wrong place?

Study Guide

(on a sheet of notebook paper)

1. How would you describe your gender after reading this book?
2. How do you express your gender?...
3. What motivated you to read this book?
4. Draw a picture that illustrates your understanding of the relationship between gender identity, gender expression and gender perception.
5. Was anything in the book surprising or new?
6. Which person in the book did you relate to the most?
7. How are sexuality and gender different? In what ways are they connected?
8. What questions are you still left with after reading? How can you research these topics further?
9. Make a list of 5 people in your life you think could benefit from this book:
10. As a gender superhero, what is your superpower?
What is your weakness? Who is your nemesis?

Use these questions for your book group, church, or just for your own personal growth and discussion!

MY GENDER WORKSHEET :

My name is _____

My pronouns are _____

My gender identity is _____

My gender expression is

Masculine (low to high)

Feminine (low to high)

Other (low to high)

Does my identity change?

Draw yourself!

My Gendered Biology (aka sex)

Assigned at birth (check one): Female Intersex Male

How do you feel about that?

Chromosomes (Need a blood test- it's totally normal to not know this!)

XX XXY XY XXY XXX XXYY other: I don't know I have multiple kinds

Hormone Levels (Need a blood test- it's totally normal to not know this!)

Estrogen:

Testosterone:

Progesterone:

No idea!

My Genitals (spectrum from smaller and more internal to larger and more external)

My favorite thing about my body (describe or draw)

Other Sometimes Gendered BodyThings (hair, curves, etc) (describe or draw)

THANK YOU!

To everyone who helped make this book happen.
This was truly a community project. We could not have done it without you.

the real-life Boston Davis Bostian

Founding creator, our original author, and still a creator in spirit, he has stood up for us, advocated for us, and done an amazing job on this project and continues to this day. He had an immeasurable impact in writing this story. This book simply wouldn't be here without him. We love you, B!

Resources

the IDEA fund
the Houston Arts Alliance
and all of our individual donors:
(list of individual donors goes here)
Thank you!!

Our Gender Heroes

Leslie Feinberg
Kate Bornstein
S. Bear Bergman
The amazing gender scouts who donate their time to educate others!
All the genderful elders who came before us and paved the way with their courage.

Volunteer Editors

Darren Arquero, our fabulous researching intern who hit the books for us for the first edition!
Erica J. Friedman, Ph.D., our wonderful volunteer for the second edition who helped catch a ton of typos, inspired us, and generally made the book the best it could be. Koomah's amazing video editing. Charles' deep insights and careful eye. Plus a hundred voices on Tumblr and Facebook and email whose insights challenged and corrected us daily. Thank you!

Over 300 survey respondents

Adam/Shadow, Alanna, Alejandra, Alex, Alex, Alex, Alex, Alfie, Amanda, Amanda, Amber, Amelie, Amy, Andi, Andy, Anne, Anne, Anthony, Ari, Ascher, Aubri, Aud, axel, Bar, Bexar, boston, boy jesse, boy jesse, Brenna, Bridgette, Brit, Brittany, Bryce, Caitlyn, Caleb, Calli, Carlos, Caroline, Carroll, Casey, cat, Cathy, Catie, Cc, CEhhbm5h, Charlie, Charlotte, Chris, Chris, Christophe, Claire, Clementine, Col., Corinne, Cyndi, Cynthia, Dakota, Damien, Damien Venture, Dan or Dani, Danielle, Danielle, Darrell, Darrell , Deborah, Devin, Dez, Dez (or Dezmond), DF, donz, dorothy, Dree, Dylan F., dylan s., EJ, Eliah, Eligh, Elissa, Elizabeth, Ellen, Ellen-Andrew , Elliott, Em, Emma, Erin, Erin, Erin :), Esther, Felix, Finn, Fox, Frankie, Gabriel, Gabriel, Gabe, GOB, Georgia, Gray,

Gwyn, Hannah, Ilanit, Indie, Issac, Jac, Jade, Jakko, Jamie, Janet, Jaxn, Jay, Jayson, Jenell, Jesi, Jesse J., Jessika, jim, Jo, Jocelyn D., Jodi, johanna, Jordan, Josephine, Jules , Justice, Justin, Kallie, Kara, Karbeth, Kate, Katharine H., Katherine, Katherine, Katie, Katie, Katie, Kay, Kaylee, Kerrie, Kieran, Kimberley, Kitty, Kya, kyler, Kyri, Laura, Lizzy, Lizzy , Logan, Lola, Lorena, Lou, Lucy, LuLu, Lydia, M, M, Madelaine, Mandi, Manni, Mason, Max, Maxwell, Meagan, Mel, Mel, Melissa, Mike, Mike, mike, molly, Mom, Morgan, Mykell, Naomi, nataluna, Nick, Nick, Nicole, Noah, Nothing, Oisín, Orion M., Patrick, Psyche, Q-Roc, Rachael, Rachel, Rae, Razan, Rebecca Q., Reedren, Renae, Retro, Rhae, Riley, Riley, Riley, Rita, River, Ro, Robyn, Rose, Rusty, Ryan, samantha, Sandra, sarah, Sarah, sarah h., Sean, Sean, Sean , Senorita Crankypants, Seth, Sevan, Shawn, Sinclair, Siobhan, Skoshi, Soren, Spencer, Stephanie O., Steve, Susan, Tae, Tala, Talcott, Talia, Taylor, Ted, thedra, Tom, Torsten, Uchenna, Vincent, Whitney, William, Yago, Yazz, Yumi, Zander, Zuri
... and many more!

Volunteer Transcribers and Translators

Our volunteer translation team is amazing. Please check out thegenderbook.com/translations to honor the recent contributors and to download versions in other languages (or join the team!) Thank you David, Christel, Charles, and Daryn also. Your work transcribing makes a large print format possible and accessible for us all.

This book is dedicated to our partners, family, & friends!

And of course...you! Thank you for reading.

GLOSSARY

note- all page numbers here reference the pages in the illustrated GENDER book, not in this text-only version.

[page is set up with definitions on file folders and index cards.]

Ally someone who is actively using their social power and privilege to support communities they are not a member of. Check out page 70 to learn how to be an advocate for gender diverse folks yourself!

Drag King or Drag Queen A performance artist who uses gender as a medium to make art, entertain, and sometimes even educate. Check out the drag show on page 54.

Cisgender a man (or boy) assigned male at birth or a woman (or girl) assigned female at birth. Meet Rahul and Amy on page 45.

Crossdresser Anyone who wears clothes made for another gender without a full-time identity of that gender, for fun, pleasure, self-expression, or comfort could identify this way. See page 56.

Gender A social system that connects qualities of masculinity, femininity, and other identities to people, colors, jobs, hobbies, and even haircuts. These characteristics can change over time and are different between cultures. See page 7 for more.

Gender binary the idea that there are only two genders: masculine and feminine. See page 26 for some critiques of this system and alternatives.

Gender dysphoria
A feeling of stress or pain from having one's gender restricted, denied, or otherwise oppressed.

Gender Euphoria
A sense of joy from having one's gender expressed or affirmed.

Gender Expression The performance of one's gender, especially how it is communicated to others through behavior, clothing, haircut, voice, and other forms of presentation. See page 32 for the full palette.

Gender identity How you think of your own gender. For example, you might say: I'm masculine, androgynous, girly, butch, agender, femme, macho, etc. See page 30 for a fun game about identity.

Gender role Expectations about a particular gender, as influenced by one's peers, parents, culture, and society. Explore your assumptions on page 8.

gender nonconforming Someone who's gender presentation is not aligned to their expected gender role. Both trans and cis folks can be either gender conforming or nonconforming (it's based more on one's expression than identity), and it can change from one day to the next. See page 46.

Gender Spectrum A continuum ranging from the extremely masculine to extremely feminine, and including all the infinite number of gendered states in between. This is more inclusive than the gender binary, but still leaves out many gender possibilities. See page 27 for this and other systems.

Intersex An individual whose biological sex characteristics (chromosomes, hormones, genitalia, etc.) are not exclusively male or female. Intersex folks can be cis, trans, or intergender. See pages 18-21.

Nonbinary (aka NB, or enby) Any gender identity which is not well-described by a two-gender (man/woman) system. See page 52 for a definition, and pages 79, 79, 81, 82, and 66 for some examples.

Sex A description of a person's biological characteristics, including genitals, hormones, chromosomes, and more. See pages 16-19.

Sexual orientation Describes our romantic and/or sexual attraction (or lack thereof) to folks of a specific gender or genders. Sexual orientation and gender are two different components of one's identity, and there are many options for both. Learn more about them on page 62.

Trans woman A woman who was assigned male at birth. The terms MTF and transsexual woman were used historically (and still are favored by some). Meet Christina on page 48, Jac on pg 78, and Nicole on pg 80.

Trans man A man who was assigned female at birth. The terms FTM and transsexual man were used historically (and still are favored by some). Meet DJ on pg 50 and Zander on pg 82.

Transition The process that some people go through to have their gender presentation more closely align with how they identify. A person's transition can occur in many ways and is often private. See pages 48-51.

Transphobia fear, anger, discomfort, or disgust of people who live outside of gender expectations. This could include harassment, discrimination, and violence. See pages 34 and 69.

Transgender (aka trans)

1. A type of gender identity that has an element of crossing over or challenging expected gender roles or expressions.

2. Someone who is not cisgender.*

*This word is an adjective, not a noun. Thus, you could talk about "a transgender person" but not "a transgender." A "transgendered" person is also incorrect.

See page 28 to learn more.

Your Own Notes

What's one thing you've learned from this book so far?

What would you add to this book?

Other notes:

Who will you give your booklet to?

Who can you loan this book to next?

What will you read or watch next?

ENDNOTES

[on a page coming out of the GENDER book typewriter]

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-

CHALLENGES AND CONCLUSIONS

[The gender book creators are giving words of encouragement]

(in speech bubbles) The more people can exist and be self-expressed, the more we can make the most of this lifetime. In commUnity, we can accomplish anything. – Robin, community relations

No matter how you identify, you are beautiful, resilient, and perfectly lovable in all your absolute worthiness.

Always keep learning, and don't be afraid to create the world you'd like to live in.

Acceptance, tolerance and a reason to go embrace people is what makes gender beautiful to me.

(in boxes across the page)

Gender expands beyond just a line with man at one end, female at the other, and transgender in the middle. It's not a line or a spectrum, it's the ocean and every person is pulling out a different fish or no fish at all. - Ari

gender shouldn't matter to ANYONE but the person that gender identity belongs to. We're all here, we're all human, we're all equals. - Dezmond

Gender roles are as harmful to men as they are to women! Gender should be a buffet....pick and choose what you want in any combination. And you can always go back through the line and choose again. - Elizabeth

This is a topic that should be discussed more! - Cait

treat people as you would want to be treated. - Johanna

It is hard to put into type what gender means to me. It allows me to be who I am, yet is just a single challenge among many I face throughout the day. It's like having the proper foundation, and now I can build my dream house on top of it. - Josie Katt

Be yourself and let everything out whether it's masculine or feminine or neither or both! If you are true to yourself you will realize who you really are and how you are most comfortable being.
- Carlos

RESOURCES

[books, movies, and groups organized on a bookshelf]

Remember this book is only the start of your gender education! Check out some of these books, groups, articles, movies, and websites to learn more.

Wikipedia has a lot of gender information too!

Youth and Family Resources

PFLAG (group)

Books by Flamingo Rampant

The Gender Affirmative Model: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Supporting Transgender and Gender Expansive Children By Colt St. Amand

Gender Born, Gender Made: Raising Healthy Gender-Nonconforming Children

transparentusa.org

Oh S#*t! I Think I'm Gay: A coming out book

Raising the Transgender Child

On the Couch with Dr. Angello: Raising & Supporting Transgender Youth

Transparent: Love, Family, and Living the T with Transgender Teenagers

Trans Youth Family Allies

Sex Is A Funny Word

Genderspectrum.org

genderinfinity.org

Gender Journey Support

My Gender Workbook (Amazing if you're just starting your gender journey.)

Trans Bodies, Trans Selves: A Resource for the Transgender Community

Transgender Studies

Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women and the Rest of Us

International Journal of Transgenderism

Transgender 101

Imagining Transgender

The Social Justice Advocate's Handbook: A Guide to Gender

The Lives of Transgender People

Transgender History

Screaming Queens

Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity

Transgender Warriors: The Making of History from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman

Transgender History

Histories of the Transgender Child

Intersex Topics

Intersexion documentary

XXY

Born Both: An Intersex Life

Middle Sexes

Between XX and XY

Fixing Sex: Intersex, Medical Authority, and Lived Experience

Interactadvocates.org

Interconnect.support

Gonads: X & Y | Radiolab

thegenderbook.com/anatomy

Legal Help (Need to change your name or gender marker?)

Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund

The Transgender Law Center

Transgender Rights

nirp.us/x-marker-map

transequality.org/documents

Biographies and Personal Stories

I Am: Trans People Speak

the Brandon Teena Story

Becoming A Visible Man

My Husband Betty

Becoming Chaz

XOXY: A Memoir

Redefining Realness: My Path to Womanhood, Identity, Love & So Much More

personal transition vlogs on YouTube

Transgender Lives: Your Stories

She's Not There

Queer Rock Love

thegenderbook.com/survey-results A listing of all 200+ survey responses you can read!

Drag Kings and Queens

Paris is Burning

The Drag King Book

Pose

Hotlines & Help

Trans Lifeline at 877-565-8860

The Trevor Project's 24/7/365 Lifeline at 866-4-U-TREVOR

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK

LGBT National Youth Talkline 800-246-7743

Gender Science

Gender and Our Brains: How New Neuroscience Explodes the Myths of the Male and Female Minds

Brain Storm: The Flaws in the Science of Sex Differences

Delusions of Gender: How Our Minds, Society, and Neurosexism Create Difference

Visit thegenderbook.com/resources for clickable links and more up to date resources

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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Other Versions

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get in touch! creators@thegenderbook.com

Join the community @thegenderbook on facebook, twitter, tumblr

free audiobook & ebook downloads at thegenderbook.com

“Gender is not about what is between your legs. it is much more about what is between your ears.” - anonymous survey response

Remember, definitions are a starting place, and the world of gender is constantly evolving. Sorry if we did not feature your identity words, this book only scratches the surface of gender possibilities. We hope you feel free to redefine terms and make new ones as needed. Gender is beautifully diverse, and so are you!

If you are struggling in your own gender journey, you are not alone! Reach out to a trusted adult, a support group, or gender-affirming therapist. You can also call the trans lifeline at +1 (877) 565-8860

Index of Topics

[all around the word “Gender”]

History of gender - page 10

Biology (aka sex) - pages 16-19

Community - page 42

Culture - pages 8,12

In kids - page 24

Cisgender - page 44

Transgender - pages 28, 40, 48-53

Expression - page 32

Perception - page 34

Identity - pages 30, 36

Definitions - page 7, 98-101

systems - pages 27-28

Journeys - pages 64-69

(Boston’s speech bubble) thanks for reading! share the knowledge and keep on being your beautiful self.

Back Cover

includes free pull-out mini booklet for a friend!

Topics covered...

what is gender?

gender versus sex

gender in kids

gender through history

gender across cultures

the gender binary

Identity & expression

gender perception

cisgender & transgender

drag queens & kings

trans women & men

nonbinary

crossdressers

how to be an ally

... and more!

“Love that you’ve created something so graphic and accessible, non-judgy, and totally essential content.”

-Katy Redd, MPH, MSW, CHES

questions? comments? suggestions?

creators @thegenderbook.com

www.thegenderbook.com