

## When a dictionary wades into the gender (non)binary

**Inspo. Dad joke. Fabulosity!** Rhotic. These are among the 533 new terms and definitions that Merriam-Webster added to its dictionary this month. But none has drawn as much attention as the **quotidian** pronoun “they,” to which Merriam-Webster has added a new sense, or meaning: “used to refer to a single person whose gender identity is nonbinary.” (Nonbinary people do not identify as either male or female.)

inspo 灵感

dad joke 老掉牙的笑话

fabulosity 美滋滋

quotidian 每日的; 平凡的

Merriam-Webster’s move, announced Tuesday, reflects the fact that many nonbinary people use “they” as their singular third-person pronoun instead of “she” or “he.”

That the oldest dictionary publisher in the United States has added its **imprimatur** to this meaning of the pronoun could be seen as a powerful statement about evolving understandings of gender identity. Or it could be seen as something much more elementary: a reflection of changing times.

imprimatur 认可; 赞许

Some pop culture news last week made Merriam-Webster’s announcement seem especially **apposite**; on Sept. 13, British singer and four-time **Grammy** winner Sam Smith, who had been referred to as “he,” announced that they were changing their pronouns to “they/them.”

apposite 适当的; 恰当的

Grammy 格莱美奖

“After a lifetime of being at war with my gender I’ve decided to embrace myself for who I am,” they wrote on Twitter.

“When prominent people make these changes, more people notice,” said Peter Sokolowski, an editor and **lexicographer** with Merriam-Webster. “And that accelerates the change, too.”

lexicographer 词典编纂者