

Decoder: Neutral alternatives to gendered words

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Simply find your gendered word and pick a neutral alternative. The neutral words cover most contexts, but may need minor tweak.

The words labelled as 'masculine' and 'feminine' have been taken from the research of [Gaucher, Friesen and Kay on gender-coded words in job advertisements](#). Words and phrases in the 'additional' section are from a variety of sources. They were added as they also show a masculine or feminine bias.

If you have any questions or comments, feel free to email us: care@idealrole.com

Masculine Words:

Active

Operating	Effective	Effectual	Agile
Energetic	Dynamic	Spirited	Diligent
Contributing	Influential	Engaged	Enthusiastic
Keen			

Adventurous

Daring	Intrepid	Unafraid
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Aggression

Energy	Dynamism	Zeal
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Aggressive

Insistent	Energetic	Dynamic	Bold
Zealous			

Ambition

Initiative
Aspiration
Purpose

Eagerness
Intention
Desire

Motivation
Goal

Enthusiasm
Aim

Ambitious

Aspiring
Energetic

Progressive

Motivated

Enthusiastic

Analyse

Examine
Explore
Investigate
Test

Inspect
Enquire into
Review

Study
Evaluate
Resolve

Scrutinise
Interpret
Reduce

Analysis

Inspection
Review
Investigation

Exploration
Evaluation

Research
Interpretation

Enquiry
Examination

Assert

Declare
Contend

Posit
Opine

Advocate

Uphold

Assertive

Positive

Bold

Assured

Self-assured

Athlete

Sportsperson

Team member

Athletic

Fit

Sporting

Autonomous

Freedom to

Responsibility for

Ownership of

Boast

Possess	Have	Pride	Pride oneself on
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Challenge

Problem	Difficult task	Question	Test
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Challenging

Testing Difficult	Stretching Energising	Stimulating Demanding	Inspiring
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Competent

Capable Skilled Adequate	Proficient Talented Satisfactory	Adept Knowledgeable Reasonable	Accomplished Efficient Decent
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Competitive

Insistent Economical	Zealous Moderate	Keen	Reasonable
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Courage

Daring	Audacity	Resolve	
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Courageous

Brave	Undaunted	Resolute	
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Decide

Resolve Choose	Reach a conclusion Select	Adjudicate	Judge
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Decisive

Resolute Important	Conclusive Pivotal	Settling Prime	Major
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Decision

Resolution
Recommendation

Conclusion
Judgement

Resolve
Pronouncement

Finding

Determination

Resolution
Purposefulness

Resolved

Will power

Sense of purpose

Determine

Specify
Work out

Ascertain

Learn

Calculate

Determined

Intent on
Spirited

Resolved

Resolute

Purposeful

Dominance

Authority

Influence

Dominant

Self-assured
Primary

Authoritative
Prominent

Main
Prevailing

Foremost

Force

Intensity
Power
Validity
Extract

Feeling
Instrument
Conclusiveness
Elicit

Passion
Cogency
Compel

Agency
Effectiveness
Oblige

Forceful

Dynamic
Compelling

Energetic
Plausible

Cogent

Convincing

Greedy

Eager

Enthusiastic

Head-strong

Wilful

Hierarchy

Grading

Ranking

Hostile

Antagonistic
Unwelcoming

Unfavourable
Opposed

Adverse
Averse

Uncomfortable
Unsympathetic

Hostility

Opposition

Antipathy

Aversion

Resentment

Impulsive

Spontaneous

Passionate

Uninhibited

Independent

Separate
Neutral
Just

Discrete
Open-minded
Freethinking

Impartial
Fair
Unconventional

Unbiased
Even-handed

Independently

Alone
By one's own efforts

On one's own
Unaided

Unassisted
On one's own initiative

Separately

Individual

Single
Distinctive
Original
Person

Separately
Distinct
Unique
Character

Discrete
Particular
Unorthodox
Nonconformist

Characteristic
Personal
Novel
Original

Individualistic

Unconventional
Original

Unorthodox

Uncommon

Unique

Intellect

Intelligence
Sense

Reason
Judgement

Comprehension
Wisdom

Thought

Intellectual

Conceptual
Intelligent

Rational
Clever

Abstract
Knowledgeable

Theoretical
Enlightened

Lead

Guide
Bring about
Promote
Oversee
First position

Show
Give rise to
Be in control of
Be first
Primacy

Result in
Create
Have control of
Ahead
Ascendency

Cause
Contribute to
Supervise
In front
Example

Leader

Pioneer
Founder

Innovator

Initiator

Developer

Leadership

Authority
Initiative

Supervision
Influence

Direction
Governance

Organisation
Administration

Leading

Main
Key
Most influential

Prime
Essential
Unparalleled

Incomparable
Most important
Peerless

Foremost
Greatest

Logic

Reason
Rationale

Rationality

Wisdom

Sense

Logical

Reasoned	Rational	Sound	Cogent
Valid	Well thought out	Coherent	Systematic
Methodical	Orderly	Articulate	Consistent
Relevant	Sensible		

Masculine

As there are no neutral alternatives for 'masculine', it is advised to reword the sentence to change its emphasis. However, if it must be used, it should ideally be balanced by the use of a feminine word in the same paragraph.

Objective

Impartial	Unbiased	Neutral	Non-discriminatory
Equitable	Fair	Open-minded	Just
Factual	Empirical	Verifiable	Aim
Intention	Purpose	Goal	Plan
Aspiration			

Opinion

Belief	Thought	Thinking	Way of thinking
Point of view	View	Viewpoint	Outlook
Stance	Perspective	Position	

Outspoken

Forthright	Direct	Candid	Open
Straightforward	Plain		

Persist

Persevere	Continue	Not give up	See through
Be tenacious	Be patient		

Persistent

Tenacious	Persevering	Resolute	Purposeful
Patient	Diligent	Relentless	

Principle

Truth	Concept	Idea	Theory
Doctrine	Belief	Attitude	Guideline
Formula	Standard	Code	Ethics
Maxim	Morals	Morality	Integrity
Beliefs	Ideals	Virtue	Honour
Sense of duty			

Principled

Moral	Ethical	Good	Virtuous
Righteous	Upstanding	Proper	Correct
Honourable	Just	Incorruptible	Conscientious
Respectable	Decent		

Reckless

Rash	Careless	Thoughtless	Inattentive
Hasty	Irresponsible	Ill-advised	Misguided
Unwise	Ill-considered	Unconsidered	Ill-conceived
Unthinking	Mindless		

Self-confidence

Self-assurance	Belief in oneself	Morale	Composure
Nerve	Poise	Presence	

Self-confident

Self-assured	Positive	Assured	Authoritative
Composed	Poised	Believing in oneself	

Self-reliant

Self-supporting	Self-sustaining
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Self-sufficient

Self-supporting	Self-sustaining
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Stubborn

Obstinate	Wilful	Uncompromising	Difficult
Contrary	Firm	Adamant	Resolute
Tenacious			

Superior

Better	More skilled	Worthier	Preferred
Higher-calibre	Accomplished	Expert	High-quality

Feminine Words:

Affectionate

Fond
Attentive

Devoted
Friendly

Caring
Amicable

Comforting
Welcoming

Childlike

Young
Unsuspicious

Youthful
Unguarded

Innocent

Unsophisticated

Cheer

Acclaim
Enliven

Praise
Animate

Congratulate

Brighten

Cheerful

Happy
Agreeable
Enthusiastic

Bright
Welcoming
Willing

Exuberant
Eager

Animated
Keen

Commit

Carry out
Accomplish
Pledge

Perform
Effect
Devote

Do
Entrust
Apply

Engage in
Deliver

Committed

Dedicated
Dutiful

Devoted

Resolute

Sincere

Commitment

Obligation
Engagement
Promise

Duty
Dedication
Resolution

Undertaking
Devotion
Guarantee

Task
Vow

Communal

Shared
Collective

Common

General

Public

Compassion

Feeling
Tolerance

Care
Humanity

Concern

Solicitude

Compassionate

Caring
Humane

Concerned
Charitable

Tolerant
Good-natured

Thoughtful

Connect

Associate

Relate to

Identify

Equate

Connection

Link
Attachment
Sponsor

Relationship
Contact

Relatedness
Colleague

Association
Associate

Considerate

Attentive
Helpful
Generous

Thoughtful
Patient

Mindful
Decent

Accommodating
Altruistic

Cooperate

Collaborate
Assist

Unite
Contribute

Combine

Coordinate with

Cooperation

Collaboration
Partnership
Assistance

Joint action
Liaison
Contribution

Combined effort
Synergy
Participation

Teamwork
Unity

Depend

Be contingent on
Be subject to

Be conditional on
Be influenced by

Be based on
Count on

Rely on

Dependable

Reliable
Sensible

Honourable
Conscientious

Constant

Stable

Emotional

Psychological
Emotive

Passionate
Uplifting

Fervent
Impassioned

Powerful
Emotive

Empathy

Identify
Have insight into

Be in tune

Have a rapport

Relate to

Feminine

Soft

Delicate

Refined

Flatterable

Complimentary
Gratifying

Favourable
Honouring

Commending

Appreciative

Gentle

Benign

Humane

Forgiving

Good-natured

Honest

Upright
Respectable
Decent
Reliable
Sincere
Forthright
Balanced

Honourable
Virtuous
Upstanding
Conscientious
Candid
Genuine
Equitable

Moral
Good
Fair
Faithful
Direct
Impartial

Ethical
Worthy
Just
Truthful
Open
Unbiased

Interpersonal

Given its use in job ads, there is no good substitute for 'interpersonal'. Consequently, it is recommended to limit the number of times it is used, and if desired, it could be balanced out by the use of the equal number of masculine words in the text. Alternatively, leaving an ad slightly feminine will not have a significant affect on male applicants.

Interdependent

Work closely with	Rely on	Contingent on	Influenced by
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Kind

Good-natured	Caring	Helpful	Thoughtful
Obliging	Selfless	Good	Accommodating
Attentive	Friendly	Courteous	Agreeable
Nice	Hospitable	Generous	Tolerant
Charitable	Gracious	Humane	Patient

Kinship

Relationship	Relatedness	Affinity	Rapport
Alliance	Association	Closeness	Bond
Community	Similarity	Likeness	Equivalence
Agreement	Symmetry	Uniformity	

Loyal

Faithful	True	Reliable	Dutiful
Dedicated			

Loyalty

Allegiance	Faithfulness	Adherence	Devotion
Reliability	Dedication		

Modesty

Self-effacement	Humility	Unpretentiousness	Lack of pretention
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Nag

Trouble	Bother	Burden	Keep on at
Harp on	Criticise	Find fault with	Hassle

Nurture

Cultivate	Grow	Tend	Encourage
Promote	Stimulate	Develop	Foster
Further	Advance	Boost	Contribute to
Assist	Help	Aid	

Pleasant

Friendly	Agreeable	Amiable	Affable
Nice	Likeable	Personable	Hospitable
Approachable	Gracious	Courteous	Cordial
Helpful	Engaging		

Polite

Well mannered	Civil	Courteous	Respectful
Deferential	Gracious	Tactful	Thoughtful
Diplomatic			

Quiet

Calm	Equable	Serene	Composed
Calm	Placid	Untroubled	Peaceful
Tranquil	Patient		

Responsible

In charge of	In control of	Accountable for	Oversee
Supervise	Organise	Produce	Important
Authoritative	Executive	Rational	Reasonable
Sensible	Stable	Reliable	Conscientious

Responsibility

Duty	Task	Function	Job
Role	Place	Onus	Authority
Control	Influence		

Responsive

Quick to react	Reactive	Receptive	Open to suggestions
Amenable	Flexible	Accessible	Approachable
Perceptive	Open	Aware	

Sensitive

Tactful	Careful	Thoughtful	Diplomatic
Delicate	Subtle	Receptive	Perceptive
Discerning	Acute	Insightful	Difficult
Tricky	Precarious		

Sensitivity

Consideration	Thoughtfulness	Tact	Diplomacy
Delicacy	Subtlety	Finesse	Awareness
Intuition	Receptiveness	Intuitiveness	Receptivity
Perceptiveness	Perception	Discernment	Insight

Submissive

Compliant	Malleable	Acquiescent	Accommodating
Amenable	Passive	Dutiful	

Support

Advocate	Promote	Further	Back
Assist	Recommend	Defend	Sponsor
Endorse			

Supportive

Encouraging	Reassuring	Concerned	Helpful
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Sympathetic

Concerned	Likeable	Agreeable	Congenial
Friendly			

Sympathise

Agree	Be in favour of	Favour	Approve of
Commend			

Sympathy

Rapport	Affinity	Agreement	Approval
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Tender

Caring	Generous	Humane
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Together

Level-headed	Well balanced	Well adjusted	Sensible
Practical	Realistic	Prudent	Pragmatic
Reasonable	Rational	Well organised	Efficient
Methodical	Calm	Collected	Composed
Assured	In conjunction	Jointly	In collaboration
In partnership			

Trust

Confidence	Belief	Certainty	Assurance
Duty	Obligation		

Trustworthy

Reliable	Full of integrity	Honourable	Sensible
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Understand

Comprehend	Grasp	Perceive	Discern
Appreciate	Recognise	Acknowledge	

Understanding

Comprehension	Perception	Discernment	Appreciation
Interpretation	Knowledge	Insight into	Familiarity with
Proficiency in	Intelligence	Capability	Judgement
Considerate	Thoughtful	Patient	Good-natured
Approachable	Reassuring		

Warm

Friendly	Affable	Amiable	Good-natured
Cordial	Welcoming	Hospitable	Sincere
Genuine	Earnest	Enthusiastic	

Whine

Complain

Yield

Relinquish
Comply with
Heed
Return

Cede
Conform to
Produce

Accede to
Agree to
Give

Defer to
Consent to
Supply

Additional Words and Phrases:

For many of the words and phrases in this section, think about the message you are trying to get across, and use simpler, more specific language.

Masculine

Beer

Best avoided as it gives the impression of a masculine culture.

Best of the best

Excellent

Great

Optimal

Ideal

Businessman

Business executive

Business person

Chairman

Coordinator
Chair

Moderator

Presiding officer

Head

Drive

Motivation
Enterprise
Movement

Will power
Initiative
Effort

Dedication
Enthusiasm

Tenacity
Campaign

Enforce

Impose
Implement

Apply

Carry out

Administer

Enforcement

Imposition
Administration
Compelling

Implementation
Administering
Requiring

Application
Discharge

Carrying out
Fulfilment

Exhaustive

Comprehensive
Thorough
Detailed

All-inclusive
In-depth

Complete
Extensive

Full
Definitive

Fast-paced

Energetic

Productive

Fearless

Intrepid
Spirited

Valiant
Unafraid

Valorous

Dynamic

Flawless

Perfect

Foosball

Best avoided as it gives the impression of a masculine culture.

Guru

Best avoided as it gives the impression of a masculine culture.

Guy

Person

Hacker

Best avoided as it gives the impression of a masculine culture.

High-performance

Productive Efficient

Intense

Passionate	Impassioned	Ardent	Earnest
Eager	Enthusiastic	Excited	Animated
Spirited			

Intensity

Passion	Ardour	Eagerness	Enthusiasm
Excitement			

Jedi

Best avoided as it gives the impression of a masculine culture.

Male

Person

Man

Person

Man-hours

Staff-hours

Man-made

Synthetic	Manufactured	Machine-made
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Manage

Be in charge of	Run	Be head of	Head
Preside over	Supervise	Oversee	Administer
Organise	Take care of	Accomplish	Achieve
Do	Carry out	Perform	Undertake

Mankind

Humanity People Human beings

Mission critical

Important Significant Vital Influential

Ninja

Best avoided as it gives the impression of a masculine culture.

Play hard

Best avoided as it gives the impression of a masculine culture.

Rigid

Fixed Set Firm

Rock star

Best avoided as it gives the impression of a masculine culture.

Sets the standard

Excels Great Guide Show
Bring about Give rise to Create Contribute to
Promote

Stock options

Well compensated

Stringent expectations

Focus on quality Detailed Continually improve

Strong

Good	Great	Successful	Influential
Spirited	Dynamic	Tenacious	Keen
Eager	Deep	Enthusiastic	Earnest
Dedicated	Compelling	Cogent	Impressive
Persuasive	Noticeable		

Superstar

Best avoided as it gives the impression of a masculine culture.

Takes risks

Experiments	Tries new things	Tries new approaches	
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Type A

Aspiring	Progressive	Motivated	Enthusiastic
Energetic			

V.I.P.

Best avoided as it gives the impression of a masculine culture.

Wizard

Best avoided as it gives the impression of a masculine culture.

Work hard

Perform	Deliver	Devote	Engage
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Workforce

Team	All employees	All staff	Everyone
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Feminine

Female

Person

Woman

Person
