

## Terms: Sexual Orientation

This is an evolving resource compiled by [John Bennett](#).

The list that follows is not intended to be all inclusive, and terms may have different meaning and context among various groups. Comments, suggestions, and/or additional terms are welcome.

Term	Definition
<b>Androgyne</b>	“A person with a gender that is both masculine and feminine or in between masculine and feminine.” ( <a href="#">Center for Advancement of Teaching</a> )
<b>Asexual</b>	“A broad spectrum of sexual orientations generally characterized by feeling varying degrees of sexual attraction or desire for partnered sexuality. Asexuality is distinct from celibacy, which is the deliberate abstention from sexual activity, despite sexual desire. Some asexual people do have sex and do experience varying levels of sexual attraction. There are many diverse ways of being asexual.” ( <a href="#">Center for Advancement of Teaching</a> )
<b>Bisexual</b>	“A person who experiences romantic, emotional, physical, and/or sexual attractions to both men and women, but not necessarily equally or simultaneously. A person whose primary sexual and affectional orientation is toward people of the same and other genders, or towards people regardless of their gender. Some people may use bisexual and pansexual interchangeably.” ( <a href="#">Center for Advancement of Teaching</a> )
<b>Gay</b>	A person who experiences romantic, emotional, physical, and/or sexual attractions to other people of the same sex. “Sometimes used as an umbrella term to refer to all people who have their primary sexual and/or romantic attractions to people of the same sex. However, people who identify as lesbian, bisexual, and transgender may feel excluded. The term can also exclusively refer to men who are attracted to other men.” ( <a href="#">Center for Advancement of Teaching</a> )
<b>Gender</b>	A socially constructed system of classification that ascribes feminine or masculine characteristics to persons.
<b>Gender Identity</b>	A person’s internal sense of themselves as a certain gender, girl/woman, boy/man, etc., irrespective of their biological sex.
<b>Heterosexual</b>	A person who experiences romantic, emotional, physical, and/or sexual attractions to other people of a different sex.
<b>Heterosexism</b>	“The assumption that all people are or should be heterosexual. Heterosexism excludes the needs, concerns, and life experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer people, while it gives advantages to heterosexual people.” ( <a href="#">Center for Advancement of Teaching</a> )

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Homophobia</b>	The fear and hatred of, or discomfort with, people who are attracted to members of the same sex. Note that some people are moving away from using “phobia” as they believe it can perpetuate an irrational fear.
<b>Lesbian</b>	A term used to describe a woman whose primary romantic, emotional, physical and/or sexual attractions are to other women.
<b>Pansexual</b>	A term used to describe people who have romantic, sexual or affectional desire for people of all genders and sexes.
<b>Queer</b>	A term used to express fluid gender identities and sexual orientations. Often used interchangeably with LGBTQ. Can be heard as a derogatory if expressed by a hetero-identified (non-queer) person.
<b>Sex</b>	Biological, physiological sex differentiated into male or female (or both) as ascribed at birth.
<b>Straight</b>	Synonym for heterosexual.
<b>Transgender or Trans</b>	An umbrella term for people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. The term transgender is not indicative of gender expression, sexual orientation, hormonal makeup, physical anatomy, or how one is perceived in daily life. Note that transgender does not have an “ed” at the end.

**Sources and Resources Include:**

Center for Advancement of Teaching, [A Guide to LGBTQIA+ Terminology](#). Temple University.  
 Human Rights Campaign, [Glossary of Terms](#).  
[Moore, Rianna](#)