



# HER RESOURCES

*A collection of resources designed to provide practical tools for women undergraduate students.*

## Combating Mansplaining

In class, at a club meeting, during a group project or in the residence hall, we've all been confronted with it - mansplaining. This phenomenon, where, with overconfidence, a man explains something in a condescending and patronizing manner, is pervasive in cultures around the world but can be a tricky situation to navigate, especially as an undergraduate student. How do we confidently shut down mansplaining and reassert our authority without causing a scene that will inevitably detract from the original offence. In this issue of Her Resources, you will find a number of practical tips on how to deal with mansplaining.

"WE WERE HAVING A CLASS WIDE BRAINSTORMING SESSION, SO THE PROFESSOR ELECTED SOMEONE TO LEAD THE CLASS IN THE DISCUSSION AND STEPPED OUT OF THE ROOM. WHENEVER I (THE ONLY FEMALE IN THE CLASS) GAVE AN IDEA, THE STUDENT LEADING WOULD SAY 'THAT PROBABLY WOULDN'T WORK. BUT MAYBE IF WE...' AND THEN PROCEEDED TO MANSPLAIN MY IDEA AND CLAIM IT FOR HIS OWN."

- MECHANICAL ENGINEERING MAJOR



# Tools

1

**Acknowledge the thought and regain control of the conversation.** Women have a tendency to accommodate behavior they see as being backed by good intentions or prefer to wait for the “right moment” to say something - this waiting and accommodating can easily build over time until the pent up frustration explodes inopportunely. By acknowledging a comment and subtly taking back the reins, you are setting up boundaries and helping to adjust bad behavior. Here are a couple of phrases you can utilize in this kind of situation:

- “I appreciate the comment, and I’ve got this.”
- “Let me continue and if there’s still a question we can address it then.”

3

**Make yourself heard.** Sometimes it’s enough to just ensure that you have the loudest voice in the room. It may feel awkward putting aside your polite “in-class” voice but in a room full of loud voices, being just a little louder may be the only way to reclaim space. It may feel uncomfortable at first, like you’re screaming, but in an already loud room, people will not take offense to you yelling just a little louder.

2

**Humor can be a woman’s greatest tool - especially when it comes to combating mansplaining.** Humor lightens the mood in times of stress and fosters approachability, all while sending a message in a less confrontational way. If you’re being talked over try throwing out something light like “Now you know I’m not going to give up the floor until I’m ready so you might as well wait...” Of course, delivery matters when using humor, so smile to make your intent clear.

4

**Call out their behavior.** When all else fails it may be time to take the more aggressive tact - calling the mansplainer out on his actions. Confronting somebody may be nerve wracking but ignoring it not only chips away at your confidence overtime, it allows that person to go on mansplaining unchecked affecting the woman after you. Oftentimes men don’t realize what they’re doing and have no ill intent, but by calling out their behavior you’re fostering understanding and curbing behavior for the future. It doesn’t have to be in the moment, wait until you can pull the mansplainer aside - state what’s going on and how it’s affecting your ability to succeed and be heard.

Tips inspired by - “[5 Ways to Shut Down Mansplaining](#)” by Kristi Hedges | Forbes

## Further Reading

“[Shut Up Sir: Combat Mansplaining, Like a Boss](#)” by Avery Blank | The Colored Girl

“[Mansplaining, explained in one simple chart](#)” by Kim Goodwin | BBC Worklife

“[Men Explain Things to Me; Facts Didn’t Get in Their Way](#)” by Rebecca Solnit | Common Dreams

## *A note from the author*

*Mansplaining is tricky especially when you’re in an environment you’re not entirely familiar with, you’re pushing back against somebody you think may react poorly, or you’re discussing something you’re not the most confident about. I’m here to tell you you’re not alone - women are navigating this situation all over the world, in the workplace, in their homes, in the grocery store, in class, everywhere. Hopefully by just having these tools in your back pocket you’ll have the confidence to start taking back the authority that mansplaining can chip away at.*

*I’m with you - go out and be awesome. -Sam Collins, MA.*