

Nouns, Articles, Adjectives and Definitions

Gender & Number of Nouns

Nouns in Spanish have gender and number. The gender determines whether a noun is either masculine or feminine. The number determines whether it is singular or plural. *The adjectives which modify these nouns, must agree in gender and in number.*

Nouns that refer to a male person or animal are said to be masculine. Nouns that refer to a female person or animal are said to be feminine. To **determine status of a noun in Spanish, it is necessary to learn them case by case. However, we do have some general guidelines to help figure out the gender of a noun.**

Most nouns ending in **–o** are masculine, and most ending in **–a** are feminine. These nouns can be made plural by adding an **–s** to their ending. For nouns ending in a consonant, you add **–es** to make them plural.

El libro	the book	La mesa	the table
El hombre	the man	la mujer	the woman
El rey	the king	la reina	the queen

Many nouns which end in an **–o** which denote persons may have a feminine equivalent ending in **–a**:

El hermano	the brother	la Hermana	the sister
El hijo	the son	la hija	the daughter
El suegro	the father-in-law	la suegra	the mother-in-law
El sobrino	the nephew	la sobrina	the niece
El esposo	the husband	la esposa	the wife

Nouns are normally accompanied by a corresponding article (**el/la/los/las**). These articles can be used as a guideline to determine whether a noun is masculine or feminine, especially in the case of some words that are derived from languages other than Latin and their gender may be unclear.

Not all nouns which end in **–a** are feminine, and not all nouns which end in **–o** are masculine. For example, the word **“día”** may have you thinking it is feminine when it is actually a masculine word (el día). It is a word derived from the Greek which means “day”. Note the following nouns ending in **–ma** but are masculine:

El mapa	the map
El tema	the theme
El idioma	the language
El problema	the problem
El dilema	the dilemma
El clima	the weather
El poema	the poem
El drama	the drama

Nouns that refer to days of the week, months of the year, names of rivers, seas, oceans and mountains, are all masculine. Ejem:

El río Amazonas	The Amazon River
El río Colorado	The Colorado River
Los Andes	The Andes Mountains
El Mediterráneo	The Mediterranean Sea
El Atlántico	The Atlantic
El sábado	Saturday

Nouns that end in –dad; -tad; -tud; -umbre; ción or sión, and –ie are normally feminine.

La igualdad	equality	
La fraternidad	fraternity	
La ciudad	the city	
La libertad	liberty	
La tempestad	storm	
La altitud	altitude	
La latitud	latitude	
La multitud	multitude	
La muchedumbre	crowd	
La costumbre	custom	
La serie	series	(La serie mundial = The World series)
La efigie	effigy	
La pasión	passion	
La inversión	investment	
La canción	song	
La expresión	expression	

Note: The nouns: **La persona** (the person) and **la víctima**, although they are feminine, they are both used even when referring to a male person. Ejm:

Él es una buena persona	He is a good person
Ella es una buena persona	She is a good person
La víctima del crimen está en el hospital	The crime victim (he or she) is in the hospital

Some nouns that refer to people do not change their form when the gender changes. However, the article change reveals the gender changes. (Note that many of them end in “-ista”)

El dentista	La dentista
El deportista	La deportista
El estudiante	La estudiante
El columnista	La columnist
El artista	La artista
El pianista	La pianist
El socialista	La socialista
El comunista	The communist

Other nouns change their meaning when their article changes:

El Papa (The Pope)	La papa (The potato)
El cura (the priest)	La cura (The cure)
El capital (investment)	La capital (The capital city)

El policía (policeman)	La policía (The Police Department)
El cometa (comet)	La cometa (kite)
El cólera (cholera)	La cólera (anger)
El radio (the radio)	La radio (the radio network)
El corte (the cut)	La corte (the court)
El frente (the front)	La frente (the forehead)

Nouns that end in “-e” are usually masculine, especially when they refer to the human body or person:

El jinete	the horseman
El pie	the foot
El vientre	the womb
El monje	the monk
El hombre	the man
El aire	the air
El traje	the suit
El cine	the cinema
El deporte	the sport
El Puente	the bridge
El diente	the tooth
El flete	the cargo
El borde	the edge
El golpe	the blow

But, there are also feminine nouns that end in “-e”:

La frente	the forehead
La clave	the clue or the musical key
La calle	the street
La leche	the milk
La noche	the night
La nube	the cloud
La gente	the people
La mente	the mind
La llave	the key
La clase	the class

The following nouns end in –a but are masculine:

El día	the day
El mapa	The map
El poeta	The poet
El cometa	The comet
El planeta	The planet

The following nouns end in –o but are feminine:

La mano	the hand
La foto	the photograph
La radio	Radio*

There are many nouns whose gender cannot be determined by the endings and must be memorized:

El origen	The origin
El mes	the month
El timbre	the doorbell
El tren	the train
El lapiz	the pencil
La sal	the salt
La gente	the people
La flor	the flower
La tribu	the tribe
La luz	the light

Other Common Nouns in Spanish

El hombre	-the man
La mujer	-the woman
El niño	- the boy
La niña	- the girl
El muchacho	- The young man
La muchacha	- The young woman
El chico	- The teenager
La chica	- The teenager
La maestra	The teacher
El maestro	The teacher
El doctor	The doctor
La doctora	The doctor
El Juez	The judge
La juez	The judge
El joven	The young man
La joven	The young lady
El paciente	The patient (masc)
La paciente	The patient (fem)

*Note that “joven” can be either an adjective or a noun depending on context. It can either mean: The young one (noun) or that someone is “young” (adj).

Plural of nouns

Generally, the plural of nouns is formed by adding –s to the words ending in a vowel, and –es to words ending in a consonant. The accompanying article must be changed from singular to plural as well. Ejem:

El libro	Los libros
La puerta	Las puertas
El mineral	Los minerales

Nouns ending in a –z - change the –z to a –c and add –es. Ejem

El pez	Los peces	(the fish)
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El lápiz	Los lápices	(the pencil)
La voz	Las voces	(the voice)

Certain nouns which end in –es (such as the days of the week) remain unchanged when made plural:

-El lunes	Los lunes
-El martes	Los martes

(except **sábado & domingo** which end in a vowel)

Other nouns ending in an unstressed syllable ending in –s, will remain the same in the plural. Ejem:

La crisis	Las crisis (the crisis)
El paraguas	Los paraguas (the umbrella)

Family names generally remain unchanged in the plural. Ejem:

Los García
Los Davey
Los Martínez

Some nouns are singular in English, but in Spanish they may be singular or plural depending on their meaning. Ejem.

El consejo	A piece of advice	Los consejos	the advice
El mueble	a piece of furniture	los muebles	the furniture
El negocio	the deal	los negocios	business
La noticia	a piece of news	las noticias	the news

Definite Articles

These articles are used before a noun to indicate a definite person or object. There are four definite articles: El/la/los/las and they are the equivalent of “The” in English.

El – is said to be a masculine/singular article: El hombre = The man

La – is said to be a feminine/singular article: La mujer = The woman

Los – is said to be a masculine/plural article: Los hombres =The men

Las – is said to be a feminine/singular article: Las mujeres =The women

Indefinite Articles

These articles are used before a noun when to indicate an indefinite person or object. There are four indefinite articles (**un/una/unos/unas**) and they are the equivalent of **a/an and some**.

Un profesor	a professor (not really sure who)
Unos profesores	some professors
Un lápiz	a pencil
Unos lápices	some pencils.

Una pluma	a pen
Unas plumas	some pens
Un alumno	a pupil
Unos alumnos	some pupils

Los Adjetivos

Most adjectives in Spanish ending in –o are masculine. They can be made feminine by changing the –o to an –a. To form the plural simply add an –s to the ending. E.g.,

Bueno	Buena
Buenos	Buenas
Gordo	Gorda
Gordos	Gordas

Adjectives must agree in gender and in number with the noun they modify. Ejem.

El chico <u>es alto</u> y muy simpático.	The boy is tall and very nice.
Los chicos <u>son altos</u> y muy simpáticos.	The boys are tall and very nice.
La chica <u>es alta</u> y muy simpática.	The girl is tall and very nice.
Las chicas <u>son altas</u> y muy simpáticas.	The girls are tall and very nice.

When an adjective modifies two nouns or more of different gender, the masculine plural is always used.

Ej. La **cartera** y el **sombrero** de la chica son **rojos**. The girl's handbag and hat are red.

El muchacho y la muchacha son muy atrevidos. The young man the young girl are very daring.

Many adjectives which end in –e are both feminine and masculine. Ejm.

Inteligente	Intelligent
Elocuente	Eloquent
Persistente	Persistent
Paciente	Patient (one who has patience – not as a medical patient)
Grande	Big
Enorme	Enormous
Responsable	Responsible
Amable	Amiable/kind
Humilde	Humble
Importante	Important
Excelente	Excellent
Corriente	Ordinary
Deseable	Desirable
Razonable	Reasonable
Admirable	Admirable
Prudente	Prudent
Distante	Distant

Vocabulary

Common Adjectives

Bueno(a)	good
Malo(a)	bad
Alto(a)	tall
Bajo(a)	short
Pequeño(a)	small
Flaco(a)	thin/skinny
Delgado(a)	slim
Esbelto(a)	slender
Gordo(a)	fat
Obeso(a)	obese
Guapo(a)	handsome
Feo(a)	ugly
Atlético(a)	athletic
Educado(a)	educated/well mannered
Bonito(a)	pretty
Bello(a)	beautiful
Hermoso(a)	lovely
Magnífico(a)	magnificent
Aplicado(a)	diligent
Extraordinario(a)	extraordinary
Carismático(a)	charismatic
Astuto(a)	astute
Perceptivo(a)	perceptive
Activo(a)	active

Adjectives which end in a consonant:

Most adjectives that end in a consonant **have the same form in the masculine and the feminine**. To form the plural of these adjectives, simply add –es to the ending.

Joven	young	(plural = jóvenes)
Popular	popular	
Sentimental	sentimental	
Gentil	gentle	
Azul	blue	
Gris	grey	
Fértil	fertile	
Fácil	easy	
Difícil	hard	
Normal	normal	
Fenomenal	phenomenal	
Leal	loyal	

Adjectives of Nationality:

Many adjectives of nationality, like many other masculine/singular adjectives in Spanish, end in an –o. To form the plural add an –s. The feminine/singular is formed by changing the –o to an –a and the plural by adding an –s to the ending.

Masculine (plural)

Norteamericano(s)
Mexicano(s)
Guatemalteco(s)
Hondureño(s)
Salvadoreño(s)
Panameño(s)
Colombiano(s)
Venezolano(s)
Ecuatoriano(s)
Peruano(s)
Chileno(s)
Argentino(s)
Dominicano(s)
Cubano(s)
Puertorriqueño(s)
Brasileño(s)
Italiano(s)
Yugoslavo(s)
Griego(s)
Polaco(s)
Soviético(s)
Ruso(s)
Chino(s)
Coreano(s)
Filipino(s)
Indio(s)

Feminine (plural)

Norteamericana(s)
Mexicana(s)
Guatemalteca(s)
Hondureña(s)
Salvadoreña(s)
Panameña(s)
Colombiana(s)
Venezolana(s)
Ecuatoriana(s)
Peruana(s)
Chilena(s)
Argentina(s)
Dominicana(s)
Cubana(s)
Puertorriqueña(s)
Brasileña(s)
Italiana(s)
Yugoslava(s)
Griega(s)
Polaca(s)
Soviética(s)
Rusa(s)
China(s)
Coreana(s)
Filipina(s)
India(s)

Adjectives of Nationality which end in a consonant are made plural by adding –es to the ending. They are made feminine by adding an –a at the end and plural by adding a –s to the same.

Masculine (plural)

Español (es)
Portugués(es)
Francés(es)
Inglés(es)
Irlandés(es)
Alemán(es)
Danés(es)
Japonés(es)

Feminine (plural)

Española(s)
Portuguesa(s)
Francesa(s)
Inglesa(s)
Irlandesa(s)
Alemana(s)
Danesa(s)
Japonesa(s)

Phrases I frequently use in the classroom:

"Repitan"	Repeat
"Otra vez"	Again
¿Cómo se dice ____ en español?	How do you say ____ in Spanish?
"Se dice....."	You say.....
¿Qué quiere decir....."	What does mean?
Quiere decir.....	It means.....

Ejem:

Q. ¿Cómo se dice "LIKEWISE" en español? How do you say "LIKEWISE" in Spanish?

A. Se dice, "IGUALMENTE" You says: "IGUALMENTE"

Q.¿Qué quiere decir "IGUALMENTE"? What does "IGUALMENTE" mean?

A. Quiere decir: "LIKEWISE". It means "LIKEWISE".

Niños, niños!!!!!! Children, children!!!!!! :=)

Definitions:

Infinitive Form:	The name of the action or verb; a verb that is not conjugated. In Spanish all Verbs end in: “AR” – “ER” or “IR” in their Infinitive Form.
First Conjugation:	All First Conjugation verbs in Spanish end in –AR in the infinitive form.
Second Conjugation:	All Second Conjugation verbs in Spanish end in –ER in the infinitive form.
Third Conjugation:	All Third Conjugation verbs in Spanish end in –IR in the infinitive form.
To conjugate	To pair the verb with the person performing the action. E.g., Hablo (I speak); Ud. come (You eat); Ellas viven en Madrid (they live in Madrid). All those verbs are said to be conjugated as they tell us the person, and the time (tense) in which the action is taking place.
First person	The first person is the one doing the speaking (Yo or nosotros)
Second person	The second person is the one being spoken to (Tú or Ud. – Uds. Or Vosotros in Spain)
Third person	The third person is the one being spoken about. (Él/ella or Ellos/Ellas)
Concordancia:	The relationship and agreement in Spanish sentences between the gender (feminine or masculine) and number (singular or plural) of nouns and adjectives.
Definite Articles:	A word used before a noun to indicate a definite person or thing. (El/la/los/las). The article determines the gender and the number of the noun they accompany. They are the equivalent of “ <u>The</u> ” in English.
Indefinite Articles:	It is a word used before a noun to indicate an indefinite person or thing (Un/Una Unos/Unas). They are the equivalent to <u>a/an and some</u> in English.
Singular	Refers to one subject (think “single”)
Plural	Refers to more than one subject.
Feminine	Nouns written with La/Las una/unas (adjectives must agree)
Masculine	Nouns written with el/los un/unos (adjectives must agree)
Subject Pronouns	<u>Subject</u> person or thing about which something is said in a sentence or phrase. <i>Mary</i> sings. <i>The car</i> is new. <u>Pronoun</u> is a word that replaces a noun: She, It, He, They, etc. <u>Subject Pronoun</u> is a personal pronoun that is used as a subject. She sings. It is new.