# The Gender of nouns

- In English, nouns can be masculine (boy, father, actor), feminine (girl, mother, actress) or neuter (car, tree, sky).

- In Spanish, nouns are only classified as masculine or feminine.

**Masculine nouns** generally are those that:

- refer to male beings (el padre – father; el señor – Mr.)
- end in **–o** (el curso – course; el cuaderno – notebook )
  notable exceptions to this rule are la mano (hand) and la foto ( picture) which are feminine

as well as

- numbers (el dos)
- days of the week (el martes)
- months of the year (el abril)
- names of rivers, oceans, seas and lakes (el Amazonas, el Pácifico)
- names of mountains and volcanoes (los Andes)

**Feminine nouns** are generally those that:

- refer to feminine beings (la madre – mother; la señorita – Miss)
- end in **–a** (la escuela – school; la nota – grade)
  notable exception to this rule is el día (day) which is masculine
  also there is a group of nouns of Greek origin ending in **–ma, –ta, –pa** which are masculine
  (el problema – problem; el planeta –planet; el mapa – map)

  nouns ending in **–ista** are masculine or feminine depending on to whom they refer.

| | |
|---|---|
| el artista - (male) artist | la artista - (female) artist |
| el futbolista - (male) soccer player | la futbolista - (female) soccer player |

- end in
  - **–ción** (la estación - station)
  - **–dad** (la ciudad - city)
  - **–tad** (la libertad - liberty)
  - **–tud** (la juventud - youth)
  - **–ie** (la serie - series)
  - **–umbre** (la costumbre - custom)

as well as

- letters of the alphabet (la a)

- Because of the **"dreaded exceptions,"** the best and surest way to know the correct gender of a noun is to learn the definite article (the) with the noun. The masculine definite article is "el" and the feminine definite article is "la".


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