

Gender (Genero)

In Spanish all nouns (los sustantivos) have either masculine or feminine gender. This is grammatical; it does not mean that Spanish speakers perceive things or ideas as having male or female attributes. It is best to learn the definite article along with the noun.

Example: Learn el *lápiz* not just *lápiz*

1. Masculine (masculino): nouns that refer to male beings and most nouns that end in **o**.

Sustantivos Masculinos

el hombre = man	el libro = book
el hijo = son	el niño = child

2. Feminine (feminine): nouns that refer to female beings and most nouns that end in **-a**, but also include nouns that end in **-ción**, **-dad**, and **-dad**.

Sustantivos Femeninos

la silla = chair	la amistad = friendship
la nación = nation	la universidad = university

3. Nouns that must be memorized are those that have other endings and do not refer to either male or female beings and can be either masculine or feminine.

el lápiz = the pencil	la clase = the class
la tarde = the afternoon	la noche = the night

4. For many nouns that refer to persons you can indicate gender by:

➤ Changing the last vowel

el bibliotecario = librarian (masculine)	la bibliotecaria = librarian (feminine)
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➤ Adding **-a** to the last consonant of the masculine form to make it feminine

el professor = the professor (masculine)	La profesora = the professor (feminine)
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5. Many other nouns that refer to people may have a single form for both masculine and feminine gender, in this case gender is indicated by an article.

<u>e</u> l estudiante (the male student)	<u>l</u> a estudiante (the female student)
<u>e</u> l dentista (the male dentist)	<u>l</u> a dentista (the female dentist)

6. Some nouns that end in **-e** also have a feminine form that ends in **-a**.

el presidente (male president)	La presidenta (female president)
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Exception to the normal rules of gender: **el día** (the day) ends in an **-a** but is masculine in gender. There are also many words that end in **-ma** that are masculine. Examples include: **el programa**; **el problema**; **el sistema**.

Definite and Indefinite Articles, Nouns and Gender

Definite and Indefinite articles must agree with the gender of the noun.

- The definite article for masculine singular nouns is **el**.
- The definite article for masculine plural nouns is **los**.

When referring to a mixed gender group of people, the definite masculine article (los) is used.

- The definite article for feminine singular nouns is **la**.
- The definite article for feminine plural nouns is **las**.
- The indefinite article for masculine singular nouns is **un**.
- The indefinite article for feminine singular nouns is **una**.
- The indefinite article for masculine plural nouns is **unos**.

When referring to a mixed gender group of people, the indefinite masculine article is used.

- The indefinite article for feminine plural nouns is **unas**.

***Un* and *Una* can also mean one. Context will determine the meaning.**