

# Properties of Nouns

**Gender.** Nouns are the basic building blocks of any language, commonly referred to as “person, place or thing” words. In Spanish, all nouns are either masculine or feminine, and knowing the proper gender is essential to correct communication in the language.

**Masculine nouns.** With some exceptions, nouns that end in -o are masculine. Days of the week, months, compound words, countries (which don’t end in -a), cities and rivers are also always masculine. There are also several nouns ending in -ema (such as *problema* or *tema*) which are masculine, even though they end in “a”. Nouns ending in -ista, such as *dentista* or *artista* can be either masculine or feminine (these are not changed to “-isto”).

**Feminine nouns.** Generally, nouns that end in -a are feminine. Other common feminine endings include: -dad, -tad, -tud, -umbre, -ión and -ie.

There are several endings which are not associated with a specific gender. For words with these endings, one must simply memorize the gender of the noun. One must also memorize common words which do not follow the “general” o/a rule, such as *el mapa*, *el escena*, *la mano*, *la foto*, *la radio*, etc.

**Pluralization.** When pluralizing a noun, a simple rule is generally followed. If the noun ends in a vowel, add -s to the end of the word (*coche: coches*, *manzana: manzanas*). For words not ending in a vowel, -es should be added (*plumón: plumones*, *papel: papeles*)

**Articles.** Words such as “the” and “a / an” must agree in both gender and number with their corresponding object in Spanish. The masculine forms in Spanish are *el/los* for “the” and *un/unos* for “a / (some)”. Feminine forms are *la/las* for “the” and *una/unas* for “a / some”.

<u>Article</u>	<u>sing. masc.</u>	<u>plural masc.</u>	<u>singular fem.</u>	<u>plural fem.</u>
The	el libro	los libros	la silla	las sillas
a	un hombre	unos hombres	una mujer	unas mujeres

## Noun Endings

### Masculine endings:

-o, -ema, -pa, -e, -or, most consonants  
+ most countries, rivers, days of the week, months of the year and compound words (el lavaplatos, etc.)

### Feminine endings:

-a, -dad, -tad, -tud, -ción, -umbre, -ora

### Key exceptions:

Masc: el mapa, el día, el planeta, el sofá

Fem: la radio, la mano, la clase, la noche

For more practice, visit:

<http://www.studyspanish.com/lessons/genoun1.htm>

<http://www.studyspanish.com/lessons/genoun2.htm>