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Nouns

A **noun** is the name of a person, place or thing. In Spanish, nouns have a **gender**; they are either **masculine** or **feminine**. Do not worry too much about why this is so, but it is important that you learn the gender of nouns as you encounter them. Knowing whether a noun is masculine or feminine is important for your accuracy in putting together sentences in Spanish.

There are some general rules of thumb that you can use to guide you through this, but remember that there are always exceptions to the rules!

- In general, **masculine** nouns end in **o** and **feminine** nouns end in **a**.

Most nouns referring to males are masculine.

e.g. **el chico**, **el hijo** = **the boy**, **the son**

Most nouns referring to females are feminine.

e.g. **la chica**, **la hija** = **the girl**, **the daughter**

- There are some common exceptions to this rule of thumb that you need to learn. These are words that end in **o** but are feminine and words that end in **a** but are actually masculine:

el problema = **the problem**

la mano = **the hand**

la foto = **the photo**

el sofá = **the sofa**

la radio = **the radio**

la moto = **the motorbike**

el clima = **the climate**

el programa = **the programme**

el planeta = **the planet**

- Not all nouns in Spanish end in **o** or **a**. When you learn a new noun in Spanish, learn it with its article as this will indicate whether it is masculine or feminine.
e.g. **el** coche = **the** car (masculine)
el sol = **the** sun (masculine)
la canción = **the** song (feminine)
- Nouns ending in **ez/eza/ción/sión/ia/dad/tad** are generally feminine.
e.g. **la** niñez = **the** childhood
la pobreza = **the** poverty
la educación = **the** education
la pasión = **the** passion
la compañía = **the** company
la verdad = **the** truth
la libertad = **freedom**

The Plural of Nouns

As with English, the plural of most nouns in Spanish end in **s**.

- When a noun ends in a vowel in the singular, simply add an **s** to make it plural.
e.g. **un** gato – **dos** gatos
una chica – **dos** chicas
un adolescente – **dos** adolescentes
- When a noun ends in a consonant other than **s** add **es**.
e.g. **una** flor – **dos** flores
un árbol – **dos** árboles
- When a noun ends in **z** change the **z** to a **c** and add **es**.
e.g. **un** lápiz – **dos** lápices
un pez – **dos** peces
- When a noun ends in a stressed vowel (one with an accent) and **s** or **n**, remove the accent from the vowel and add **es**.
e.g. **un** autobús – **dos** autobuses
un inglés – **dos** ingleses
un camión – **dos** camiones

- When a noun ends in an unstressed vowel and an **s** there is no change in the noun to make it plural but you must make the article plural.

e.g. **el** lunes – **los** lunes

el virus – **los** virus

EXERCISES

1. **Masculine or feminine?** Using the notes above, decide the **gender** of the following nouns and then translate them into English:

(a) chico _____

(e) rosa _____

(b) mujer _____

(f) padre _____

(c) mano _____

(g) goma _____

(d) bolígrafo _____

(h) problema _____

2. Make the following **singular nouns plural** and the **plural nouns singular** and then translate them into English:

(a) un gato – dos _____

(f) un lápiz – tres _____

(b) el español – los _____

(g) una chica – dos _____

(c) una canción – dos _____

(h) un inglés – dos _____

(d) dos peces – un _____

(i) tres autobuses – un _____

(e) el martes – los _____

(j) dos problemas – un _____