

Gender

In English, nouns can be masculine, feminine, or neuter (meaning having no gender). **In Spanish, however, every noun must be masculine or feminine.**

There is no way to tell for sure what gender the noun is, so **you must memorize** if it is masculine or feminine. **Don't assume!**

For example, we would assume a woman's dress to be feminine, but in Spanish it's not. It's masculine. We might assume a man's tie to be masculine, but it's feminine.

So, how do we know?

In Spanish we can look at the article (the little word that means "the" or "a")

For example: *El colegio* = the high school
the word "el" tells us that it is masculine.

La escuela = the school
"la" tells us that it is Feminine.

A general rule is "if it ends in "o", it's masculine. If it ends in "a" it's feminine."

As always, there are exceptions to the rule, which you will learn later. So, for now, just **memorize the articles with the word.**

Articles

According to Webster's dictionary an article is a small class of words "that are linked to nouns and that typically have a grammatical function identifying the noun as a noun rather than describing it. In English the definite article is *the*, the indefinite article is *a* or *an*."

For example: the book – "the" indicates a specific book. This is the definite article
A book – "a" refers a book in general. This is the indefinite article.

In Spanish it works the same way. However, there are eight articles. First they are divided into definite and indefinite. Then, masculine or feminine, and lastly they are divided by singular and plural. Use the charts to help.

Definite articles = "the"

"THE"	Singular	Plural
Masculine	El	Los
Feminine	La	Las

Indefinite Articles "a, an, some"

	Singular "a, an"	Plural "Some"
Masculine	Un	unos
Feminine	una	unas

Articles

- In English, there is a definite article “**the**” and an indefinite article “**a, an.**” If you say, “Hand me the book,” you have a definite book in mind. If you say, “Hand me a book,” you don’t seem to care which one – just any old book will do.
- Spanish has definite and indefinite articles, too, but the Spanish articles have number (singular and plural) and gender (masculine and feminine).

Definite Article

Masculine		Feminine	
Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
el	los	la	las

Indefinite Article

Masculine		Feminine	
Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
un	unos	una	unas

- When learning nouns in Spanish, it is best to learn the definite article with the noun. That way, you can be sure of the gender of the noun. This is especially true if a noun ends in a letter other than an **-o** or **-a**, or if they happen to be an exception to the rule.

El coche – the car
El examen – the test
La clase – the class
La lección – the lesson

- The masculine singular form of the definite and indefinite articles are used before feminine nouns beginning with an accented **-a** or **-ha**. This is done only in the singular form.

el agua – water but las aguas
el águila – eagle but las águilas
un alma – soul but unas almas
un hacha – axe but unas hachas

Estructura

Complete each sentence with **un/una** or **el/la** as appropriate.

1. Pepe es alumno en _____ Colegio Juárez.

2. Pepe es _____ alumno muy serio.

3. Teresa es _____ alumna muy buena también.

P:

This

4. Pero Teresa no es de México. Ella es alumna en _____ escuela secundaria en Tejas.

5. _____ escuela donde Teresa es alumna es muy buena.