



learning target

Aim of this section is to learn which noun has got which gender.

noun	gender
der Mann	male
die Frau	female
das Kind	neuter

rules

There are 3 different genders in German:

- männlich (male)
- weiblich (female)
- sächlich (neuter)

Each gender is indicated by an article:

- **der** for male nouns
- **die** for female nouns
- **das** for neuter nouns

Which noun has which gender?

The rule is:

There is no rule or only rules with many exceptions.

I want to give some examples to show that there is no logic behind the gender in German. Let's have a look at the three words: man, woman and girl.

- der Mann (man)-> obviously male
- die Frau (woman)-> obviously female
- das Mädchen (girl)-> obviously female, but the grammatical gender in German is neuter!

That means the grammatical gender in German has often nothing to do with the biological gender. A second example is the word *ocean* in German. We've got three different words to describe it:

- der Ozean -> male
- die See -> female
- das Meer-> neuter

That's why we always learn the article together with the noun. See the article as part of the noun and not as an extra word.

Nevertheless, I'd like to give you some rules which might help to remember which is the correct gender.



DER - male nouns

1. all days, months and seasons are male

- **der Montag** (Monday)
- **der Mai** (May)
- **der Winter** (winter)

2. occupations and nationalities when you referring to a male person are male

- **der Arzt** (male doctor)
- **der Student** (male student)
- **der Deutsche** (male German)

3. names of cars and trains are male

- **der ICE** (fastest train in Germany)
- **der Mercedes** (famous German car)
- **der VW** (famous German car)

4. male people are usually grammatically male

- **der Mann** (man)
- **der Junge** (boy)
- **der Bruder** (brother)

5. most mountains and lakes are male

- **der Bodensee** (famous German lake)
- **der Mount Everest** (famous mountain between Nepal and China)
- **der Kilimandscharo** (famous mountain in Africa)

6. most nouns ending with -ich, -ig, -ling are male

- **der Honig** (honey)
- **der Teppich** (carpet)
- **der Schädling** (pest)

7. most nouns ending with -el, -en, -er are male

- **der Wagen** (car)
- **der Löffel** (spoon)
- **der Becher** (mug)



DIE - female nouns

1. all nouns ending with -heit, -keit, -schaft, -tät, -ung are female

- **die Freundschaft** (friendship)
- **die Freiheit** (freedom)
- **die Wohnung** (apartment)

2. all nouns ending with -ik, -ade, -age, -enz, -ette, -ine, -ion, -ur are female

- **die Musik** (music)
- **die Waage** (scale)
- **die Nation** (nation)

3. all cardinal numbers are female

- **die Eins** (one)
- **die Zwei** (two)
- **die Drei** (three)

4. female people are usually grammatically female

- **die Frau** (woman)
- **die Dame** (lady)
- **die Tochter** (daughter)

5. most flowers and trees are female

- **die Rose** (rose)
- **die Orchidee** (orchid)
- **die Palme** (palm)

6. most nouns ending with -ei, -ie, -ive, -itis, -isse are female

- **die Polizei** (police)
- **die Linie** (line)
- **die Initiative** (initiative)

7. most nouns ending with -e are female

- **die Ecke** (corner)
- **die Grenze** (border)
- **die Decke** (ceiling)



DAS - neuter nouns

1. all nouns ending with -lein, -chen are neuter

- **das Fräulein** (miss)
- **das Mädchen** (girl)
- **das Kätzchen** (kitten)

2. all names of hotels, cafés and theaters are neuter

- **das Hilton** (Hilton)
- **das Gewandhaus** (famous German theater)
- **das Altwerk** (pizza restaurant in Nideggen)

3. all colors are neuter

- **das Blau** (blue)
- **das Rot** (red)
- **das Gelb** (yellow)

4. all gerunds (verbs which become nouns) are neuter

- **das Lesen** (reading)
- **das Schreiben** (writing)
- **das Sehen** (seeing)

5. many cities and countries are neuter

- **das Deutschland** (Germany)
- **das Italien** (Italy)
- **das Köln** (Cologne)

6. most nouns ending with -tum, -ment, -um, -ium, -nis are neuter

- **das Museum** (museum)
- **das Datum** (date)
- **das Verhältnis** (relationship)

7. most nouns starting with "Ge" and ending with "e" are neuter

- **das Gebäude** (building)
- **das Gefüge** (structure)
- **das Gerede** (gossip)