

1.1 Nouns and articles 

Nouns & Articles

The first building blocks to learning Spanish.

1.1 Nouns and articles

Spanish nouns

- A **noun** is a word used to identify people, animals, places, things, or ideas.
- Unlike English, all Spanish nouns have **gender**; that means they are considered either masculine or feminine (*masculino o femenino*).
- As in English, nouns in Spanish also have **number**, meaning that they are either **singular or plural**.

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Examples of Spanish nouns

Masculine Noun	Singular	Plural	Feminine Noun	Singular	Plural
Man - hombre	El hombre	Los hombres	Woman - mujer	La mujer	Las mujeres
Book - libro	El libro	Los libros	School - escuela	La escuela	Las escuelas
Dictionary - diccionario	El diccionario	Los diccionarios	Suitcase - maleta	La maleta	Las maletas

*** Do you notice an extra word included before the noun in these examples? It is the *article*. In beginning Spanish courses and books, it is common to always place the article before the noun even though it is not really needed. This is done to help you remember which words are masculine and feminine.

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- Generally, nouns that refer to males, like **el hombre** (the man), are masculine.
- Nouns that refer to females, like **la mujer** (the woman), are feminine.

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- Many nouns that refer to male beings end in **-o** or **-or**.
- Their corresponding feminine forms end in **-a** and **-ora**, respectively.



el conductor



la profesora

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- The masculine and feminine forms of nouns that end in **-ista**, like **turista**, are the same.
- so gender is indicated by the article **el** (masculine) or **la** (feminine). Some other nouns have identical masculine and feminine forms.

el joven

the youth; the young man

el estudiante

the (male) student

la joven

the youth; the young woman

la estudiante

the (female) student

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Some examples --

Nouns that refer to living things

Masculine nouns

el hombre *the man*

ending in **-o**

el chico *the boy*

el pasajero *the (male) passenger*

ending in **-or**

el conductor *the (male) driver*

el profesor *the (male) teacher*

ending in **-ista**

el turista *the (male) tourist*

Feminine nouns

la mujer *the woman*

ending in **-a**

la chica *the girl*

la pasajera *the (female) passenger*

ending in **-ora**

la conductora *the (female) driver*

la profesora *the (female) teacher*

ending in **-ista**

la turista *the (female) tourist*

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Nouns that refer to non-living things

Masculine nouns

ending in -o

el cuaderno	<i>the notebook</i>
el diario	<i>the diary</i>
el diccionario	<i>the dictionary</i>
el número	<i>the number</i>
el video	<i>the video</i>

ending in -ma

el problema	<i>the problem</i>
el programa	<i>the program</i>

ending in -s

el autobús	<i>the bus</i>
el país	<i>the country</i>

Feminine nouns

ending in -a

la computadora	<i>the computer</i>
la cosa	<i>the thing</i>
la escuela	<i>the school</i>
la maleta	<i>the suitcase</i>
la palabra	<i>the word</i>

ending in -ción

la lección	<i>the lesson</i>
la conversación	<i>the conversation</i>

ending in -dad

la nacionalidad	<i>the nationality</i>
la comunidad	<i>the community</i>

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- As shown above, **certain noun endings** are strongly associated with **a specific gender**, so you can **use them to determine** if a noun is masculine or feminine.

1.1 Nouns and articles

- Because the gender of nouns that refer to non-living things cannot be determined by foolproof rules, you should memorize the gender of each noun you learn.
- It is helpful to learn each noun with its corresponding article, **e**l for masculine and **la** for feminine.

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- Another reason to memorize the gender of every noun is that there are common exceptions to the rules of gender.
- For example, **el mapa** (*map*) and **el día** (*day*) end in **-a**, but are masculine.

La mano (*hand*) ends in **-o**, but is feminine.

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To summarize so far

Nouns

- Refer to living & non-living things
- Have gender in Spanish
- Have masculine & feminine endings in Spanish
- Some nouns are neutral, but the preceding article tells the gender

Noun Endings

Masculine	Feminine
O	A
OR	ORA
MA	CIÓN
S	DAD

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Moving on to

PLURAL NOUNS

1.1 Nouns and articles

Plural of nouns

- To form the plural add **-s** to nouns that end in a vowel. For nouns that end in a consonant add **-es**. For nouns that end in **z** change the **z** to **c**, then add **-es**.

el chico → los chicos

el diario → los diarios

el problema → los problemas

la nacionalidad → las nacionalidades

el país → los países

el lápiz (*pencil*) → los lápices

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- In general, when a singular noun has an accent mark on the last syllable, the accent is dropped from the plural form.

la lección → las lecciones

el autobús → los autobuses

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- Use the **masculine plural form** to refer to a group that includes both males and females.

1 pasajero + 2 pasajeras = 3 pasajeros 2 chicos + 2 chicas = 4 chicos

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Spanish articles

- As you know, English often uses **definite articles (the)** and **indefinite articles (a, an)** before nouns.
- Spanish also has definite and indefinite articles.
- Unlike English, Spanish articles **vary in form** because **they agree in gender and number with the nouns they modify.**

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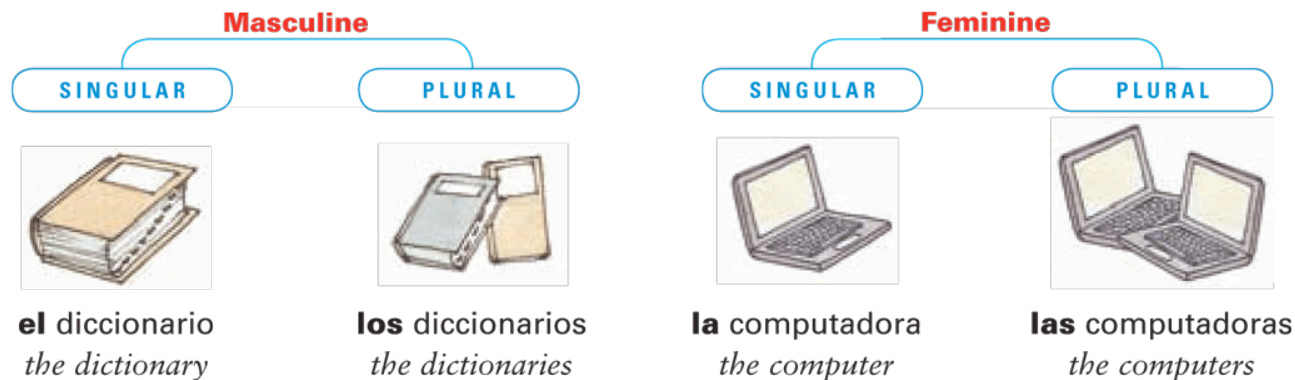
Now on to.....

ARTICLES

1.1 Nouns and articles

Definite articles

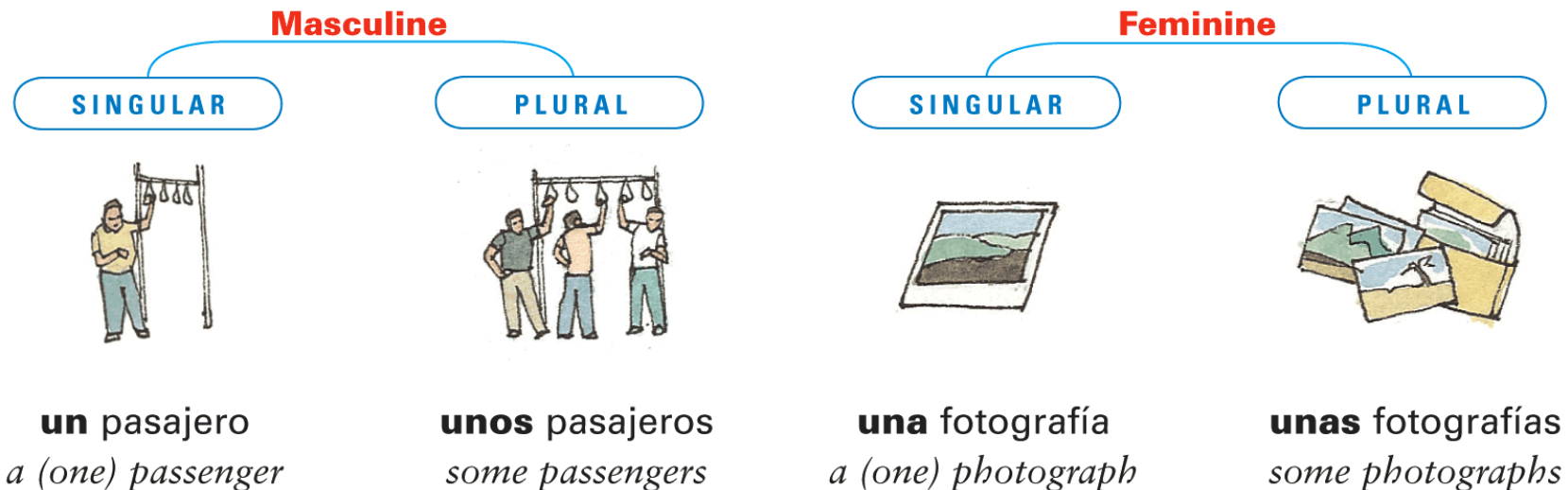
- Spanish has four forms that are equivalent to the English definite article *the*. You use definite articles to refer to specific nouns.



1.1 Nouns and articles

Indefinite articles

- Spanish has four forms that are equivalent to the English indefinite article, which according to context may mean *a*, *an*, or *some*. Use indefinite articles to refer to unspecified persons or things.



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What are the definite & indefinite articles?

Definite Articles	Indefinite Articles
Refer to specific people or things	Refer to unspecified people or things
El -- the masculine, singular form	Un -- a, an masculine, singular form
La -- the feminine, singular form	Una -- a, an feminine, singular form
Los -- the masculine, plural form	Unos -- some masculine, plural form
Las -- the feminine, singular form	Unas -- some feminine, plural form

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To summarize the last two sections....

Plural Nouns

- If a singular noun has an accent on the last syllable, drop the accent when making it plural.
- Use the masculine plural form of the noun when referring to a group of mixed masculine/feminine objects or people.

Ends in vowel	Ends consonant	Ends in -z
Add --s	Add -es	Change the -Z to -C and add -es

Articles

Definite Articles	Indefinite Articles
Refer to specific people or things	Refer to unspecified people or things
El – the	Un – a, an
Los – the	Unos -- some
La – the	Una -- a, an
Las -- the	Unas -- some