

1.1 Nouns and articles



Spanish nouns

ANTE TODO

A noun is a word used to identify people, animals, places, things, or ideas. Unlike English, all Spanish nouns, even those that refer to non-living things, have gender; that is, they are considered either masculine or feminine. As in English, nouns in Spanish also have number, meaning that they are either singular or plural.

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*

- ▶ Generally, nouns that refer to males, like **el hombre**, are masculine, while nouns that refer to females, like **la mujer**, are feminine.
- ▶ 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

- ▶ 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

¡LENGUA VIVA!

Profesor(a) and **turista** are *cognates*—words that share similar spellings and meanings in Spanish and English. Recognizing cognates will help you determine the meaning of many Spanish words. Here are some other cognates:

la administración,
el animal,
el apartamento,
el cálculo, el color,
la decisión, la historia,
la música,
el restaurante,
el/la secretario/a.

AYUDA

Cognates can certainly be very helpful in your study of Spanish. Beware, however, of “false” cognates, those that have similar spellings in Spanish and English, but different meanings:

la carpeta *folder*
el/la conductor(a)
driver
el éxito *success*
la fábrica *factory*