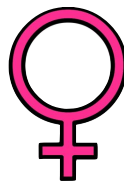
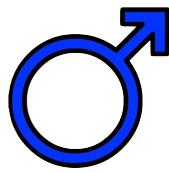


# Gender of German Nouns

der, die, or das?



1

# What is a noun?

❖ person, place or thing



the father  
*der Vater*



the city  
*die Stadt*



the book  
*das Buch*



the cat  
*die Katze*



the table  
*der Tisch*

❖ including concepts and ideas



(the) love  
*die Liebe*



(the) peace  
*der Frieden*



(the) heat  
*die Hitze*



(the) anger  
*der Ärger*

2

# Gender in English

- ❖ English uses "natural" gender for pronouns (he / she / it)
  - ❖ male people have masculine gender: the man = he
  - ❖ female people have feminine gender: the woman = she
  - ❖ inanimate objects/ideas have neuter gender: the house = it
- ❖ English nouns and articles do not show any gender
  - ❖ the article "the" is the same for male, female and object nouns

3

# Gender in German

- ❖ German does not use "natural" gender for the majority of nouns
- ❖ Every noun (person, thing or place) has a gender in German
- ❖ German has three different genders
  - ❖ some nouns are masculine ("der")
  - ❖ some nouns are feminine ("die")
  - ❖ some nouns are neuter ("das")



the flower  
*die Blume*



the chair  
*der Stuhl*



the telephone  
*das Telefon*

4

# Gender is not obvious!

- ❖ The gender of a noun in German is not based on the meaning of the word, and it connotes no emotional feelings about the idea
- ❖ "Masculine", "Feminine" and "Neuter" are categories of grammar
  - ❖ for example, "masculine gender" in German grammar does not mean the object/idea is manly, strong, powerful or big; "feminine gender" does not mean the thing is girly or delicate.
- ❖ Gender in German is based off the SOUND and FORM of the word itself – not the meaning!

5

# Learning German genders

- ❖ Sometimes gender can be predicted by the sound, shape or ending of a German noun
- ❖ Many times, gender cannot easily be predicted, especially by beginning learners
- ❖ The gender of each noun must be learned and memorized with the vocabulary as a phrase ("der Mann" or "die Frau" or "das Kind")

6

# Masculine "the" = der

❖ The nouns for male people are almost always masculine:



**der Mann**  
(the man)



**der Sohn**  
(the son)



**der Vater**  
(the father)



**der Professor**  
(the professor)



**der Student**  
(the professor)

7

# Masculine "the" = der

❖ Things, concepts and places can also be masculine:



**der Apfel**  
(the apple)



**der Computer**  
(the computer)



**der Tag**  
(the day)



**der Ring**  
(the ring)



**der Hund**  
(the dog)

8

# Masculine "the" = der

- ❖ Remember that it is not the meaning of these words that makes them masculine.
  - ❖ It is a quality of sound/ending/shape of the word itself which causes it to be placed in the category called "masculine".
- ❖ Germans do not think the concept of a "day" is somehow manly.
  - ❖ The sound/shape of the word "Tag" cause them to identify it as "der Tag".

9

# Feminine "the" = die

- ❖ The nouns for female people are almost always feminine:



**die Frau**  
(the woman)



**die Mutter**  
(the mother)

**die Tochter**  
(the daughter)



**die Professorin**  
(the professor, f.)



**die Studentin**  
(the student, f.)

10

# Feminine "the" = die

- ❖ Things, concepts and places can also be feminine:



**die Musik**  
*(the music)*



**die Universität**  
*(the university)*



**die Tür**  
*(the door)*



**die Nacht**  
*(the night)*

11

# Feminine "the" = die

- ❖ Remember that it is not the meaning of these words that makes them feminine.
  - ❖ It is a quality of sound/ending/shape of the word itself which causes it to be placed in the category called "feminine".
- ❖ Germans do not think the concept of "music" is somehow girly.
  - ❖ The sound/shape of the word "Musik" cause them to identify it as "die Musik".

12

# Neuter "the" = das

❖ A small number of words for children in German are neuter:



**das Mädchen**  
(the girl)



**das Kind**  
(the child)



**das Baby**  
(the baby)

13

# Neuter "the" = das

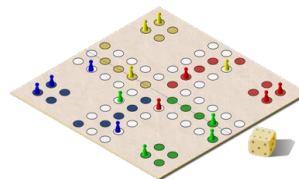
❖ Things, concepts and places can also be neuter:



**das Fenster**  
(the window)



**das Buch**  
(the book)



**das Spiel**  
(the game)



**das Sofa**  
(the sofa)

14

# Neuter "the" = das

- ❖ Remember that it is not the meaning of these words that makes them neuter.
  - ❖ It is a quality of sound/ending/shape of the word itself which causes it to be placed in the category called "neuter".
- ❖ Germans do not think the idea of a "book" is somehow neutral.
  - ❖ The sound/shape of the word "Buch" cause them to identify it as "das Buch".

15

# Plural "the" = die

- ❖ When a noun becomes plural (more than one) in German, in essence it "loses" any gender — there is only one plural article.
- ❖ All plural nouns use the article die for "the".



**der Mann → die Männer**  
(the man) (the men)



**die Frau → die Frauen**  
(the woman) (the women)



**das Buch → die Bücher**  
(the book) (the books)

16

# Plural "the" = die

- ❖ Although the plural "die" and the feminine "die" look and sound the same, they act differently in other ways which you will soon learn.
- ❖ For now, simply remember that **ALL NOUNS**, whatever their original gender, become "die" in the plural.
- ❖ You will learn how to form plural words soon. The important thing here is to remember that "the" anythings (plural) = die.

17

# Compound Nouns

- ❖ When two nouns combine into one, the gender of a compound noun is based on the final noun in the compound.



das Haus + die Frau



die Hausfrau  
(the housewife)



die Schule + das Buch



das Schulbuch  
(the schoolbook)



die Kinder + der Garten



der Kindergarten  
(the kindergarten)

18

# Predicting Gender

- ❖ Predicting a noun's gender is not always possible in German.
  - ❖ There are a few guidelines which may help you, but none work in 100% of the nouns, there are always exceptions.
- ❖ You should always learn the definite article (der-die-das) with the new vocabulary.
  - ❖ don't just learn "Mann", learn "der Mann"!



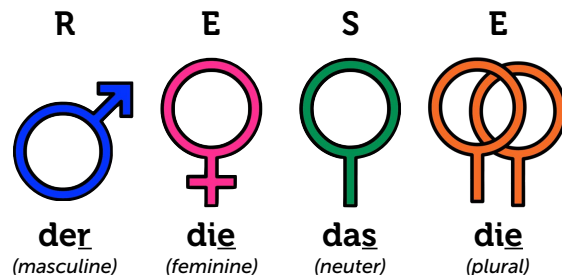
**der Mann**  
(the man)

19

# Predicting Gender

- ❖ You must learn the gender articles right away with the noun:

- ❖ masculine = der
- ❖ feminine = die
- ❖ neuter = das
- ❖ plural = die



- ❖ The short form to learn in order is "RESE" for masc-fem-neut-plur!

20

# Masculine nouns

- ❖ Male people and male animals are usually DER (masculine)
  - ❖ der Mann, der Herr, der Sohn, der Vater
- ❖ Male professions and titles often end in -er or -or:



**der Lehrer**  
(the teacher)



**der Professor**  
(the professor)



**der Mechaniker**  
(the mechanic)



**der Bäcker**  
(the baker)

21

# Masculine nouns

- ❖ Objects that "do" things and end in -er/-or are usually masculine:



**der Computer**  
(the computer)



**der Toaster**  
(the toaster)



**der Motor**  
(the motor)

22

# Masculine nouns

❖ Days, months, and most seasons are masculine:



**der Tag**  
(the day)



**der Montag**  
(the Monday)



**der Oktober**  
(October)



**der Sommer**  
(the summer)

23

# Masculine nouns

❖ Car brands are always masculine:



**der Mercedes**  
(the Mercedes)



**der Ford**  
(the Ford)



**der Porsche**  
(the Porsche)



**der Audi**  
(the Audi)

24

# Masculine nouns

- ❖ Some other common masculine endings are -ig, -ling, -ant, and -ismus.



**der Honig**  
*(the honey)*



**der Elefant**  
*(the elephant)*



**der Kapitalismus**  
*(capitalism)*

- ❖ Please note: you are not expected to learn all of these nouns: please focus on the nouns in your vocabulary lists.

25

# Feminine nouns

- ❖ Female people and female animals are usually DIE (feminine)
  - ❖ die Frau, die Dame, die Mutter, die Tochter
- ❖ Female professions and titles add an -in to the masculine noun:



**die Lehrerin**  
*(the female teacher)*



**die Polizistin**  
*(the policewoman)*



**die Bäckerin**  
*(the female baker)*



**die Musikerin**  
*(the female musician)*

26

# Feminine nouns

- ❖ Many (but not all!) nouns ending in -e or -a are feminine:



**die Rose**  
(the rose)



**die Blume**  
(the flower)



**die Lampe**  
(the lamp)



**die Mensa**  
(the cafeteria)

- ❖ some big exceptions: der Name, der Junge, das Ende

27

# Feminine nouns

- ❖ Some other common feminine endings are -ung, -ion, -ei/-ie, -heit/-keit, -ik, -ur, -ät, and -schaft.



**die Zeitung**  
(the newspaper)



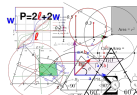
**die Religion**  
(the religion)



**die Biologie**  
(the biology)



**die Gesundheit**  
(the health)



**die Mathematik**  
(the mathematics)



**die Universität**  
(the university)



**die Landschaft**  
(the landscape)

- ❖ Please note: you are not expected to learn all of these nouns: please focus on the nouns in your vocabulary lists.

28

# Neuter nouns

- ❖ Most young animals and infants are DAS (neuter):



**das Kind**  
*(the child)*



**das Baby**  
*(the baby)*



**das Lamm**  
*(the lamb)*

29

# Neuter nouns

- ❖ Nouns with the suffixes **-lein** and **-chen** — which are diminutive, making the noun smaller — have the neuter DAS gender:



**das Häuschen**  
*(the hut, cabin, shed)*



**das Mädchen**  
*(the young girl)*



**das Fräulein**  
*(old word for 'miss')*



**das Kätzchen**  
*(the kitten)*



**das Hündchen**  
*(the puppy)*

30

# Neuter nouns

- ❖ Gerunds — or verbs used as nouns, like “the speaking” or “the filmmaking” — have the neuter DAS gender:



**das Laufen**  
*(the running)*



**das Schwimmen**  
*(the swimming)*



**das Radfahren**  
*(the biking)*

31

# Neuter nouns

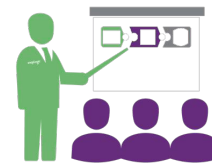
- ❖ Some other common neuter endings are -ment, -um, and -ing.



**das Dokument**  
*(the document)*



**das Museum**  
*(the museum)*



**das Training**  
*(the training)*

- ❖ Please note: you are not expected to learn all of these nouns: please focus on the nouns in your vocabulary lists.

32

# Memorize!

- ❖ Don't worry if it seems confusing at first.
- ❖ Memorize each new word with its article:



**der Computer**  
*(the computer)*



**das Handy**  
*(the cell phone)*



**die Zeitung**  
*(the newspaper)*

- ❖ It gets easier as your brain adapts!

# Das Ende