

NOUNS-GENDER

STUDY NOTE

You know that living beings are of either the male or the female sex. Now compare

the words in the following pairs:

Boy (Lion, Hero, Cock-sparrow)

Girl (Lioness, Heroine, Hen-sparrow)

What do you notice?

The first word of each pair is the name of a male animal.

The second word of each pair is the name of a female animal.

A noun that denotes a male animal is said to be of the **Masculine Gender**.

[Gender comes from Latin genus, kind or sort.]

A noun that denotes a female animal is said to be of the **Feminine Gender**.

A noun that denotes either a male or a female is said to be of the **Common Gender**; as

Parent, child, friend, pupil, servant, thief, relation, enemy, cousin, person, orphan, student, baby, monarch, neighbour, infant.

A noun that denotes a thing that is neither male nor female (i.e., thing without life) is said to be of the **Neuter Gender**; as,

Book, pen, room, tree.

[Neuter means neither, that is, neither male nor female]

Objects without life are often personified, that is, spoken of as if they were living beings. We then regard them as males or females.

The Masculine Gender is often applied to objects remarkable for strength and violence; as,

The Sun, Summer, Winter, Time, Death,

The sun sheds his beams on rich and poor alike.

The Feminine Gender is sometimes applied to objects remarkable for beauty, gentleness, and gracefulness; as, The Moon, the Earth, Spring, Autumn, Nature, Liberty, Justice, Mercy, Peace, Hope, Charity.

The moon has hidden her face behind a cloud.

Spring has spread her mantle of green over the earth.
Peace hath her victories no less renowned than war.

This use is most common in poetry but certain nouns are personified in prose too.
A ship is often spoken of as she; as,
The ship lost her boats in the storm.

Ways of Forming the Feminine of Nouns

29. There are three ways of forming the Feminine of Nouns:

(1) By using an entirely different word; as

Masculine -- Feminine

Bachelor -- maid, spinster

Boy -- girl

Brother -- sister

Buck -- doe

Bull (or ox) -- cow

Bullock -- heifer

Cock -- hen

Colt -- filly

Dog -- bitch

Drake -- duck

Drone -- bee

Earl -- countess

Father -- mother

Gander -- goose

Gentleman -- lady

Hart -- roe

Horse -- mare

Husband -- wife

King -- queen

Lord -- lady

Man -- woman

Monk (or friar) -- nun

Nephew -- niece

Papa -- mamma

Ram -- ewe

Sir -- madam

Son -- daughter

Stag -- hind

Uncle -- aunt

Wizard -- witch

(2) By adding a syllable (-ess, -ine, -trix, -a, etc) as,

Masculine -- Feminine

Author -- authoress

Baron -- baroness

Count -- countess

Giant -- giantess

Heir -- heiress

Host -- hostess

Jew -- Jewess

Lion -- lioness

Manager -- manageress

Mayor -- mayoress

Patron -- patroness

Peer -- peeress

Poet -- poetess

Priest -- priestess

Prophet -- prophetess

Shepherd -- shepherdess

Steward -- stewardess

Viscount -- viscountess

[Note that in the following -ess is added after dropping the vowel of the masculine ending]

Masculine -- Feminine

Actor -- actress

Benefactor -- benefactress
Conductor -- conductress
Enchanter -- enchantress
Founder -- foundress
Hunter -- huntress
Instructor -- instructress
Negro -- negress
Abbot -- abbess
Duke -- duchess
Emperor -- empress
Preceptor -- preceptress
Prince -- princess
Songster -- songstress
Tempter -- temptress
Seamster -- seamstress
Tiger -- tigress
Traitor -- traitress
Waiter -- waitress
Master -- mistress
Murderer -- murderer
Sorcerer -- sorceress

Note:- The suffix -ess is the commonest suffix used to form feminine nouns, from the masculine, and is the only one which we now use in forming a new feminine noun.

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Masculine -- Feminine

Hero -- heroine
Testator -- testatrix
Czar -- czarina
Sultan -- sultana
Signor -- signora
Fox -- vixen

(3) By placing a word before or after; as,

Masculine -- Feminine

Grandfather -- grandmother

Greatuncle -- greataunt

Manservant -- maidservant

Landlord -- landlady

milkman -- milkwoman

peacock -- peahen

salesman -- saleswoman

washerman -- washerwoman

