Spanish nouns are either masculine or feminine. There is no neuter gender noun. The typical rules you can lean on and the exceptions you should be aware of are listed here.

**Articles**

Masculine nouns have the article "**el**" in singular form and the article "**los**" in plural.

Feminine nouns have the article "**la**" in singular form and the article "**las**" in plural.

When a plural includes both masculine and feminine elements, the masculine noun is used with the article "los" (for example: parents are "los padres", children are "los niños" or "los hijos").

**Feminine nouns**

**Generally nouns ending in "-a"**

la fruta, la mesa, la palabra

*See Masculine for exceptions!*

**Nouns ending in "-dad" / "-tad" / "-tud"**

* la ciudad, la edad, la universidad
* la amistad, la facultad, la libertad
* la inquietud, la juventud, la virtud

**Nouns ending in "-ción" / "-sión" / "-gión"**

* la canción, la estación, la lección
* la profesión, la televisión, la tensión
* la legión, la región, la religión

**Nouns ending in "-ez"**, as long as they refer to abstract nouns formed with suffixes

* la rigidez -- rigidity
* la sensatez -- soberness
* la validez -- validity
* la vejez -- old age, oldness

**Nouns ending in "-triz"**

la actriz, la directriz, la emperatriz

**Nouns ending in "-umbre"**

la costumbre, la incertidumbre, la legumbre

**Shortened version of originally feminine nouns**

* la disco -- la discoteca\*
* la foto -- la fotografía
* la moto -- la motocicleta
* la tele -- la televisión

\* but when it refers to a *disk*, it's **el** disco

**Nouns referring to women**

* la madre -- mother
* la mujer -- woman, wife

**Exceptions**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *ending in "-d"*   * la merced -- mercy * la pared -- wall * la red -- net * la salud -- health * la sed -- thirst   *ending in "-z"*   * la cruz -- cross * la faz -- face * la luz -- light * la nariz -- nose * la nuez -- nut * la paz -- peace * la raíz -- root * la vez -- time, turn * la voz -- voice   *other*   * la filial -- affiliate * la flor -- flower * la imagen -- image * la ley -- law * la mano -- hand * la miel -- honey * la piel -- skin * la sal -- salt * la tribu -- tribe | *ending in "-e"*   * la base -- basis * la calle -- street * la carne -- meat * la clase -- class * la clave -- clue * la corriente -- current * la fe -- faith * la fiebre -- fever * la frase -- saying, phrase * la fuente -- source * la gente -- people (!) * la leche -- milk * la lente -- lens * la llave -- key * la mente -- mind * la muerte -- death * la nieve -- snow * la noche -- night, evening * la nube -- cloud * la sangre -- blood * la sede -- headquarters * la serpiente -- snake * la suerte -- fate, luck * la tarde -- afternoon * la torre -- tower |

**Masculine**

In broad generality, all nouns not fitting into the above categories and exceptions - plus the following.

**Nouns of Greek origin, ending in "-ma" / "-ta" / "-pa"**

* el clima, el programa, el tema
* el cometa, el planeta (but to confuse you: la dieta :-))
* el mapa

**Exceptions**

* el día (el mediodía) -- day, daytime (noon)
* el gorila -- gorilla
* el pijama -- pajamas
* el sofá -- sofa
* el tranvía -- tram, streetcar
* el yoga -- yoga

**Different gender, different meaning**

Some words can be used as either feminine or masculine but this will change their meaning. Some examples:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **masculine** | **feminine** |
| capital cólera coma corte cura final frente orden papa parte pendiente pez |  | capital cholera coma cut priest ending front order pope message, report earring fish | capital city bile, anger comma court cure sports final forehead decree, holy order potato part, portion slope, hillside tar, pitch |

**Different gender, same meaning**

Certain nouns, usually referring to people, can be used in the same meaning as either feminine or masculine, depending on who you refer to.

* nouns ending in "-ista" (artista, florista, jurista)
* nouns ending in "-crata" (aristócrata, tecnócrata)
* amante -- lover
* cliente -- client
* guía -- guide
* idiota -- idiot
* modelo -- model
* soprano
* testigo -- witness

**Feminine nouns with the article "el"**

When a feminine noun begins with a stressed "a-" or "ha-" syllable, its singular form will have an "el" instead of "la" (and "un" instead of "una" as an indefinite article). In plural, it's back to normal.

* el agua, el alma, el asma
* el habla, el hada, el hambre\*

\* doubly irregular: a noun ending in "-e" with the article "el" - and still feminine :-)