

The gender hints below are divided into "Always" (no or few exceptions to the rule) and "Usually" (some exceptions) categories for each gender. One more important gender rule to remember: in compound nouns, the last word determines the gender (as in *die Geburt + der Ort = der Geburtsort*, birthplace).

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## MÄNNLICH - der

### Always MASCULINE (der/ein):

- Days, months, and seasons: *Montag, Juli, Sommer* (Monday, July, summer). The one exception is *das Frühjahr*, another word for *der Frühling*, spring.
- Points of the compass, map locations and winds: *Nordwest(en)* (northwest), *Süd(en)* (south), *der Föhn* (warm wind out of the Alps), *der Scirocco* (sirocco, a hot desert wind).
- Precipitation: *Regen, Schnee, Nebel* (rain, snow, fog/mist)
- Names of cars and trains: *der VW, der ICE, der Mercedes*. (But motorbikes are feminine.)
- Words ending in *-ismus*: *Journalismus, Kommunismus, Synchronismus* (equal *-ism* words in English)
- Words ending in *-ner*: *Rentner, Schaffner, Zentner, Zöllner* (pensioner, [train] conductor, hundred-weight, customs collector). The feminine form adds *-in* (*die Rentnerin*).
- The basic "atmospheric" elements that end in *-stoff*: *der Sauerstoff* (oxygen), *der Stickstoff* (nitrogen), *der Wasserstoff* (hydrogen), plus carbon (*der Kohlenstoff*). The only other element (out of 112) that is masculine is *der Schwefel* (sulphur). **Note:** All of the other [chemical elements](#) are neuter (*das Aluminium, Blei, Kupfer, Uran, Zink, usw.*).

### Usually MASCULINE (der/ein):

- Agents (people who do something), most occupations and nationalities: *der Architekt, der Arzt, der Deutsche, der Fahrer, der Verkäufer, der Student, der Täter* (architect, physician, German [person], driver, salesman, student, perpetrator). **Note** that the feminine form of these terms almost always ends in *-in* (*die Architektin, die Ärztin, die Fahrerin, die Verkäuferin, die Studentin, Täterin*, but *die Deutsche*).
- Nouns ending in *-er*, when referring to people (but *die Jungfer, die Mutter, die Schwester, die Tochter*; *das Fenster*, window, is not a person.)
- Names of alcoholic drinks: *der Wein, der Wodka* (but *das Bier*)
- Names of mountains and lakes: *der Berg, der See* (but Germany's highest peak, *die Zugspitze* follows the rule for the feminine ending *-e*, and *die See* is the sea).
- Most rivers outside of Europe: *der Amazonas, der Kongo, der Mississippi* (See [World Rivers in German](#))
- Most nouns ending in *-ich, -ling, -ist*: *Rettich, Sittich, Schädling, Frühling, Pazifist* (radish, parakeet, pest/parasite, spring, pacifist)

## WEIBLICH - die

### Always FEMININE (die/eine):

- Nouns ending in the following suffixes: *-heit, -keit, -tät, -ung, -schaft* - Examples: *Freiheit, Schnelligkeit, Universität, Zeitung, Freundschaft* (freedom, quickness, university, newspaper, friendship). **Note** that these suffixes usually have a corresponding English suffix, such as *-ness (-heit, -keit), -ty (-tät), -ship (-schaft)*.
- Nouns ending in *-ie*: *Drogerie, Geographie, Komödie, Industrie, Ironie* (often equal to words ending in *-y* in English)
- Names of planes, ships and motorbikes: *die Boeing 747, die Titanic, die BMW* (motorbike only; the car is *der BMW*). The *die* comes from *die Maschine*, which can mean plane, motorbike and engine. - Helpful reminder: Ships are often referred to as "she" in English.
- Nouns ending in *-ik*: *Grammatik, Graphik, Klinik, Musik, Panik, Physik* (a rare exception is *das Pik*, spade [cards])
- Borrowed (foreign) nouns ending in: *-ade, -age, -anz, -enz, -ette, -ine, -ion, -tur*: *Parade, Blamage* (shame), *Bilanz, Distanz, Frequenz, Serviette* (napkin), *Limonade, Nation, Konjunktur* (economic trend). **Note**: Such words often resemble their English equivalent. A rare *-ade* exception: *der Nomade*.
- Cardinal numbers: *eine Eins, eine Drei* (a one, a three)

### Usually FEMININE (die/eine):

- Nouns ending in *-in* that pertain to female people, occupations, nationalities: *Amerikanerin, Studentin* (female American, student), but *der Harlekin* and also many non-people words: *das Benzin, der Urin* (gasoline/petrol, urine).
- Most nouns ending in *-e*: *Ecke, Ente, Grenze, Pistole, Seuche* (corner, duck, border, pistol, epidemic), but *der Deutsche, das Ensemble, der Friede, der Junge* ([the] German, ensemble, peace, boy)
- Nouns ending in *-ei*: *Partei, Schweinerei* (party [political], dirty trick/mess), but *das Ei, der Papagei* (egg, parrot).
- Most types of flowers and trees: *Birke, Chrysantheme, Eiche, Rose* (birch, chrysanthemum, oak, rose), but *der Ahorn*, (maple), *das Gänseblümchen* (daisy), and the word for tree is *der Baum*
- Borrowed (foreign) nouns ending in *-isse, -itis, -ive*: *Hornisse, Initiative* (hornet, initiative)

## SÄCHLICH - das

### Always NEUTER (das/ein):

- Nouns ending in *-chen* or *-lein*: *Fräulein, Häuschen, Kaninchen, Mädchen* (unmarried woman, cottage, rabbit, girl/maiden)
- Nouns ending in *-o* (often from Latin): *Auto, Büro, Kasino, Konto* (account), *Radio, Veto, Video* - **Note**: Two rare exceptions: *der Euro, der Sirocco* (sirocco, a hot desert wind).
- Infinitives used as nouns (gerunds): *das Essen, das Schreiben* (eating/food, writing)
- Almost all of the 112 known [chemical elements](#) (*das Aluminium, Blei, Kupfer, Uran, Zink, Zinn, Zirkonium, usw.*) - except for five that are masculine: *der Kohlenstoff* (carbon), *der Sauerstoff* (oxygen), *der Stickstoff* (nitrogen), *der Wasserstoff* (hydrogen), and *der Schwefel* (sulphur). Note: Most of the elements end in **-ium**, a *das* ending.
- Names of hotels, cafés and theaters
- Names of colors: *das Blau, das Rot* (blue, red)

### Usually NEUTER (das/ein):

- Names of towns and countries: *Deutschland, Chicago, Brasilien* (but learn non-*das* countries, such as: *der Irak, der Jemen, die Schweiz, die Türkei, die USA* [plur.]) - See: [Land und Leute](#), a German-English chart of countries, nationalities and languages.
- Most metals: *Aluminium, Blei, Kupfer, Messing, Zinn* (aluminium, lead, copper, brass, tin/pewter; but *die Bronze, der Stahl* - bronze, steel)
- Fractions: *ein Viertel, ein Drittel* (but *die Hälfte*, half)
- Most nouns starting with *Ge-*: *Genick, Gerät, Geschirr, Geschlecht, Gesetz, Gespräch* (back of the neck, device, dishes, sex/gender, law, conversation), but there are many exceptions, such as *der Gebrauch, der Gedanke, die Gefahr, der Gefallen, der Genuss, der Geschmack, der Gewinn, die Gebühr, die Geburt, die Geduld, die Gemeinde, die Geschichte*, and others)
- Most borrowed (foreign) nouns ending in *-ment*: *Ressentiment, Supplement* (but *der Zement, der/das Moment* [2 diff. meanings])
- Most nouns ending in *-nis*: *Versäumnis* (neglect; but *die Erlaubnis, die Erkenntnis, die Finsternis*)
- Most nouns ending in *-tum* or *-um*: *Christentum, Königtum* (Christianity, kingship; but *der Irrtum, der Reichtum* - error, wealth)