The Gender of nouns

- In English, nouns can be masculine (boy, father, actor), feminine (girl, mother, actress) or neuter (car, tree, sky).

- In Spanish, nouns are only classified as masculine or feminine.

**Masculine nouns** generally are those that:
- refer to male beings (el padre – father; el señor – Mr.)
- end in -o (el curso – course; el cuaderno – notebook)
  - notable exceptions to this rule are la mano (hand) and la foto (picture) which are feminine as well as
  - numbers (el dos)
  - days of the week (el martes)
  - months of the year (el abril)
  - names of rivers, oceans, seas and lakes (el Amazonas, el Pácifico)
  - names of mountains and volcanoes (los Andes)

**Feminine nouns** are generally those that:
- refer to feminine beings (la madre – mother; la señorita – Miss)
- end in -a (la escuela – school; la nota – grade)
  - notable exception to this rule is el día (day) which is masculine
  - also there is a group of nouns of Greek origin ending in -ma, -ta, -pa which are masculine
    - el problema – problem; el planeta – planet; el mapa – map
  - nouns ending in -ista are masculine or feminine depending on to whom they refer.
    - el artista - (male) artist
    - la artista - (female) artist
    - el futbolista - (male) soccer player
    - la futbolista - (female) soccer player
- end in
  - -ción (la estación - station)
  - -dad (la ciudad - city)
  - -tad (la libertad - liberty)
  - -tud (la juventud - youth)
  - -ie (la serie - series)
  - -umbre (la costumbre - custom)

Because of the “**dreaded exceptions,**” the best and surest way to know the correct gender of a noun is to learn the definite article (the) with the noun. The masculine definite article is “el” and the feminine definite article is “la”.