

Gender and number

In Spanish, many words have both gender and number, for example, the word “hermano” (brother) has masculine gender (género masculino) and singular number (número singular). The word “sister” has feminine gender and the word “brothers” has masculine gender and plural number (número plural).

Many English words have no gender, such as “computer”, “window” or “face”, even those that might have a use for it, such as “cat” or “bear”, but in Spanish almost all words have a gender, for example, “ventana” (window) is feminine, and “suelo” (floor) is masculine.

There are some exceptions, but generally the words that end in “a” are feminine and those that end in “o” are masculine. The ones that don't end in either... you'll have to remember.

Just like in English, plurals are formed by adding “s” at the end of the word, but you have to keep an eye on the articles: we don't have one single “the” for all, we have four:

el (masculine singular)

la (feminine singular)

los (masculine plural)

las (feminine plural)

Let's see a few examples:

El suelo	the floor
La manzana	the apple (since “manzana” is feminine)
Los hermanos	the brothers
Las hermanas	the sisters
La llave	the key (“llave” is one of the difficult ones you'll have to remember)
La botella	the bottle
El libro	the book
Las estrellas	the stars

These rules apply also to adjectives:

The short book	el libro corto
The short candle	la vela corta
The short movies	las películas cortas
The short roads	los caminos cortos

And, of course, to pronouns:

This book	este libro
This candle	esta vela
These movies	estas películas
These roads	estos caminos

As usual, there are some exceptions: some nouns don't change when you change the gender, such as some professions (“el pianista” or “la pianista” depending on whether it's a man or a woman, but the word “pianista” doesn't change). Some adjectives also don't change (“verde” means “green”, but it won't change depending on what it refers to)