

6. At the Supermarket En el supermercado

vegetables
las legumbres



fruit
la fruta



meat
la carne



cabbage
la col



apple
la manzana



eggs
los huevos



lettuce
la lechuga



orange
la naranja



butter
la mantequilla



green beans
las judías
verdes



lemon
el limón



bread
el pan



peas
los guisantes



lime
el limón
verde



cheese
el queso



carrots
las zanahorias



cherries
las cerezas



food
la comida



tomatoes
los tomates



banana
el plátano



milk
la leche



potatoes
las papas



grapes
las uvas



cookies
las galletas
dulces



onions
las cebollas



strawberries
las fresas



crackers
las galletas



spinach
las espinacas



peach
el durazno



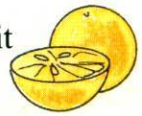
potato chips
las papas
fritas a la
inglesa



avocado
el aguacate



grapefruit
la
toronja



bottle
la botella



nuts
las nueces



melon
el melón



chocolate
el chocolate



watermelon
la sandía



fruit juice
el jugo



candy
los dulces



raspberries
las
frambuesas



cereal
el cereal



frozen dinner
la cena congelada



soap
el jabón



money
el dinero



pie
la empanada



pineapple
la piña



can
la lata

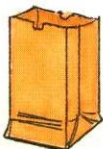




shopping cart
el carrito de compras



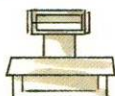
shopping bag
la bolsa de compras



sign
el letrero



scale
la báscula



price
el precio



cash register
la caja



cashier
la cajera



1

Carne o pescado

Meat or fish

In this unit you will learn to:

- ✓ Use nouns.
- ✓ Recognize their gender and form the plural.
- ✓ Use nouns relating to people.
- ✓ Go shopping in a Spanish or Latin American market.
- ✓ Write a shopping list of food and drink items.

CEFR: Nouns (A1); Can understand short, simple texts containing high frequency vocabulary (A2); Can write short, simple notes relating to personal needs (A2).

Masculine and feminine, singular and plural nouns

	Masculine nouns		Feminine nouns	
Singular	el piso	the flat	la mesa	the table
	el café	the coffee	la calle	the street
	el señor	the gentleman	la señora	the lady
	el padre	the father	la madre	the mother
Plural	los pisos	the flats	las mesas	the tables
	los cafés	the coffees	las calles	the streets
	los señores	the gentlemen	las señoras	the ladies
	los padres	the parents		

Meaning and usage

Nouns are words which name things (**carta** letter), people and animals (**hermano** brother), places (**plaza** square), abstractions (**felicidad** happiness). In Spanish they are either masculine (m) or feminine (f), and this is their *gender*. They can also be singular (sing.), naming just one thing, or plural (pl.), referring to more than one thing. This is known as their *number*. In the sections on gender and number that follow, nouns will be shown with the definite article, the Spanish forms for *the*: **el** for masculine and **la** for feminine. Plural forms will be preceded by **los** (m) and **las** (f):



It is important to know a noun's gender as words that go with it, such as articles and adjectives, also have gender and must agree with it:
el vestido negro (the black dress), **la camisa negra** (the black shirt).

Nouns and their forms

Gender

- 1 most nouns ending in **-o** are masculine and most of those ending in **-a** are feminine: **el libro** (m) (book); **la casa** (f) (house). There are many exceptions to this rule, among them the following: **el clima** (climate), **el día** (day), **el idioma** (language), **el mapa** (map), **el pijama** (pyjamas); **la mano** (hand), **la radio*** (radio), **la foto** (grafía) (photo).
(*el radio in some Latin American countries)
- 2 the following endings usually correspond to masculine nouns: **-aje, -ambre, -án, -ón, -or**: **el equipaje** (luggage), **el calambre** (cramp), **el huracán** (hurricane), **el rincón** (corner), **el color** (colour).
- 3 the endings that follow normally correspond to feminine nouns: **-ción, -sión, -ie, -dad, -tad, -tud, -umbre**: **la canción** (song), **la ilusión** (illusion), **la teleserie** (TV series), **la verdad** (truth), **la libertad** (liberty, freedom), **la juventud** (youth), **la muchedumbre** (crowd).
- 4 the following categories of nouns are usually masculine: languages, days of the week, colours, fruit trees, rivers, oceans and mountains: **el inglés** (English), **el lunes** (Monday), **el azul** (blue), **el naranjo** (orange tree), **el Támesis** (the Thames).
- 5 the following are usually feminine: islands, letters of the alphabet: **la Isla de Pascua** (Easter Island), **la efe** (the letter 'f').
- 6 a small number of nouns change meaning according to their gender: **el policía** (m) (policeman) – **la policía** (f) (the police); **el cura** (m) (the priest) – **la cura** (f) (the cure).



A Show the gender of each noun by giving the correct article el (m) or la (f).

___ naranjo	___ chocolate	___ cocina	___ salud
___ ración	___ nombre	___ flor	___ leche
___ fiambre	___ jamón	___ garaje	___ nacionalidad
___ arroz	___ mostaza	___ calamar	___ azafrán
___ explosión	___ libertad	___ especie	___ problema

B In each group of nouns, identify which noun is of a different gender. Give its gender.

1	televisión	telenovela	teleserie	programa
2	mañana	día	noche	tarde
3	calle	parque	cine	puente
4	nación	pasión	avión	estación
5	pie	mano	brazo	ojo
6	vista	panorama	poema	idioma

7	vanidad	amistad	honor	virtud
8	color	verde	dolor	sangre
9	norte	sur	gente	oeste
10	Amazonas	Rin	Baleares	Sena



When you are not sure of the meaning of a word, look it up in the dictionary and take a note of it. Having to look up a word helps to fix it in your mind.



Gender of nouns referring to people

C Answer the questions.

- 1 If **el hijo** means *the son*, who is **la hija**?
- 2 If you have an appointment with **la doctora**, will you be seeing a man or a woman?
- 1 most nouns referring to male human beings are masculine and most of those referring to females are feminine. To form the feminine of nouns that refer to people change the **-o** to **-a** or add **-a** to the consonant: **el hermano** (*brother*) – **la hermana** (*sister*); **el inglés** (*the Englishman*) – **la inglesa** (*the Englishwoman*).



Some cultural differences exist in this area when naming professions, with some people still using the masculine form for certain occupations: **el/la médico** (*male/female doctor*); **el/la arquitecto** (*male/female architect*).

- 2 some nouns have different forms for males and females: **el marido** (*the husband*) – **la mujer** (*the wife*); **el padre** (*the father*) – **la madre** (*the mother*).
- 3 nouns ending in **-a**, among them those ending in **-ista**, are invariable: **el/la atleta** (m/f) (*athlete*); **el/la dentista** (m/f) (*dentist*); **el/la guía** (m/f) (*guide*).
- 4 most nouns ending in **-e** and **-nte** are invariable: **el/la conserje** (m/f) (*caretaker*); **el/la estudiante** (m/f) (*student*); **el/la gerente** (m/f) (*manager*). Common exceptions are: **el cliente** (m) – **la clienta** (f) (*client*); **el dependiente** (m) – **la dependienta** (f) (*shop assistant*); **el jefe** (m) – **la jefa** (f) (*boss, manager*).
- 5 a few nouns have a fixed gender (regardless of the sex of the person): **la estrella de cine** (m/f) (*film star*); **el personaje** (m/f) (*character*); **la persona** (m/f) (*person*); **la víctima** (m/f) (*victim*).



Words naming animals function more or less in the same way as for people: **el gato** (*male cat*) – **la gata** (*female cat*); **el perro** (*male dog*) – **la perra** (*female dog*). But **el caballo** (*horse*) – **la yegua** (*mare*); **el toro** (*bull*) – **la vaca** (*cow*).



D Match the male noun with its female equivalent and give the meaning of both.

el profesor	la turista
el portugués	la duquesa
el trabajador	la actriz
el rey	la niña
el turista	la marroquí
el hombre	la portuguesa
el niño	la mujer
el duque	la reina
el marroquí	la trabajadora
el actor	la profesora

Number



E Give the plural forms for:

- 1 el estudiante (*student*)
- 2 la moto (*motorbike*)
- 3 la plaza (*square*)
- 4 nouns ending in a vowel form the plural by adding **-s**: **el coche** (*car*) – **los coches** (*cars*); **la iglesia** (*church*) – **las iglesias** (*churches*).
- 5 nouns ending in a consonant form the plural by adding **-es**: **el reloj** (*watch*) – **los relojes** (*watches*); **la ciudad** (*city*) – **las ciudades** (*cities*).
- 6 nouns ending in **-z** change **-z** to **-c** and add **-es**: **el pez** (*fish*) – **los peces** (*fish*); **la voz** (*voice*) – **las voces** (*voices*).
- 7 nouns ending in **-i** and **-u** add **-es**: **marroquí** (*Moroccan*) – **marroquíes** (*Moroccans*); **hindú** (*Hindu*) – **hindúes** (*Hindus*). But note **el menú** (*menu*), **los menús** (*menus*).



F If the plural form for el inglés (Englishman) is los ingleses (English people), what is the plural form for the following:

- 1 el alemán (*the German man*)
- 2 el escocés (*Scotsman*)
- 3 el galés (*Welshman*)
- 4 nouns with an accent on the last syllable lose this when forming the plural: **la canción** (*song*) – **las canciones** (*songs*); **el francés** (*the Frenchman*) – **los franceses** (*French people*).

- 6 nouns ending in **-en**, with the stress on the penultimate syllable, add an accent in the plural form to keep the stress in the same position:
el examen (exam) – **los exámenes** (the exams);
el joven (the young man) – **los jóvenes** (young people, youth).



Some words do not change for number, among them surnames and generally nouns ending in **-s** with an unstressed last syllable: **los Castro**, **el/los paraguas** (the umbrella/umbrellas).

- 7 for the plural of nouns referring to people which involve members of both sexes, use the plural form of the masculine noun: **el padre** (the father) – **los padres** (the parents); **el sobrino** (m) (nephew) – **los sobrinos** (m) (nephews and nieces).
- 8 a few common Spanish nouns are singular where English would use a plural:
la ropa (clothes), **la gente** (people):

La gente está muy descontenta con la situación económica. (People are very unhappy with the economic situation.)



G Give the plural of the following nouns together with *los* or *las*.

el libro	_____	el bar	_____	el color	_____
la silla	_____	la ciudad	_____	la superficie	_____
la región	_____	el avión	_____	la nación	_____
el escocés	_____	el francés	_____	el alemán	_____
el hotel	_____	el mes	_____	la ley	_____
el café	_____	el té	_____	el viernes	_____

H Give the singular of the following nouns together with *el* or *la*.

las revistas	_____	las nubes	_____	las flores	_____
los países	_____	los sofás	_____	los tranvías	_____
los días	_____	los pies	_____	los menús	_____
las actrices	_____	las luces	_____	las veces	_____
los jóvenes	_____	las imágenes	_____	los orígenes	_____
los autobuses	_____	los andenes	_____	los cumpleaños	_____



If you are not sure whether or not a noun requires a written accent, say it out loud. The written accent tells you that stress is not regular, i.e. it does not fall on the penultimate (last but one) syllable. If stress falls on the penultimate syllable, there is no need for a written accent.