

Genders in German (short version)

In German, each name has a gender:

masculine (der), feminine (die), neutral (das).

Unlike English, even objects have a gender.

Examples:

- the letter → **der Brief** (masculine)
- the sun → **die Sonne** (feminine)
- the quarter → **das Viertel** (neuter)

You can't guess everything. But there are some very useful patterns.

1. Masculine (der)

A. Generally male

- Male humans / animals
der Vater (the father), der Lehrer (the teacher), der Hund (the dog)
(exception: the cat → **die Katze**)
- Seasons, months, days
der Sommer (summer), der Mai (May), der Mittwoch (Wednesday)
- Weather phenomena
der Wind (the wind), der Regen (the rain), der Sturm (the storm)
- Car brands
der BMW, der Mercedes

B. Typically masculine endings

If a word ends with:

-ant, -ast, -ich, -ig, -ismus, -ling, -or, -us

→ it is almost always masculine.

Exemples: der Kontrast (the contrast), der Honig (the honey), der Motor (the motor).

2. Female (die)

A. Generally female

- Femal humans /animals
die Mutter (the mother), die Lehrerin (the teacher), die Henne (the hen)
- Planes, motorcycles, boats
die Boeing, die Suzuki
(exception: **der Airbus**)

- Rivers in Germany
die Donau (the Danube), die Elbe (the Elbe)
(exceptions: **der Rhein, der Main**)
- Numbers
die Null (the zero), die Million (the million)

B. Typically feminine endings

If a word ends with:

-a, -anz/-enz, -ei, -heit/-keit, -ie, -in, -schaft, -sion/-tion, -tät, -ung, -ur

→ it's feminine.

Examples: die Pizza, die Krankheit (the disease), die Universität (the university), die Natur (the nature).

3. Neuter (das)

A. Generally neuter

- Young humans/animals
das Baby, das Kind (the child)
- Continents, countries, cities (often without article)
Frankreich (France), Spanien (Spain)
With adjective: das neue Polen (the new Poland)
Exceptions: die Schweiz (Switzerland), der Iran, die Ukraine, die Niederlande (the Netherlands)...
- Letters of the alphabet /musical notes
das A, das hohe C

B. Typically neuter endings

If a word ends with:

-chen, -lein, -ma, -ment, -tel, -um

→ it is neuter.

Examples: das Mädchen (the little girl), das Appartement, das Album.

Summary

- **der** = men, days, weather, cars, and words ending in -ig/-or/-us, etc.
- **die** = women, rivers, numbers, words ending in -ung/-keit/-tät/-heit/-ei, etc.
- **das** = young beings, countries/continents, letters, words ending in -chen/-lein/-um, etc.