

Weak masculine nouns (short version)

In German, there is a group of masculine names called "weak masculine nouns" whose ending will vary according to the case (nominative, accusative, dative and genitive, see the corresponding chapter) and whether they are in the singular or plural

1. How it works

- **Plural:** they **always** end in **-en** or **-n**.
- **In the singular:**
 - **Nominative:** the basic form (der Student)
 - **Accusative / Dative / Genitive:** they take **-en** or **-n** (Studenten, Jungen...)

Examples:

- der Junge → *den/dem/des* Jungen → Jungen (plural)
- der Student → *den/dem/des* Studenten → Studenten (plural)

Exception:

- **der Herr:**
 - singular (except nominative): **Herrn**
 - plural: **Herren**
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2. How to recognize them

A. Masculine nouns which finish in **-e** (and which designate a human or an animal)

der Affe (monkey), der Hase (hare), der Junge (young), der Riese (giant)...

B. Masculine words of foreign origin (stressed ending)

der Fotograf, der Soldat, der Präsident, der Tourist, der Idiot, der Planet...

C. Some masculine nouns which end with a consonant

der Bauer (farmer), der Held (hero), der Mensch (human being), der Nachbar (neighbor), der Herr (gentleman)...

3. Risk of confusion

Adjectives used as nouns are **not** weak masculine nouns.

Example:

- der Deutsche (the German) comes from *deutsch*, so not a weak masculine noun.
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4. The 6 irregular weak masculine nouns

They take **-ns** instead of just -n/en in the genitive singular.

- der Buchstabe (letter of the alphabet) → des Buchstabens
- der Funke (spark) → des Funkens
- der Gedanke (thought) → des Gedankens
- der Glaube (belief) → des Glaubens
- der Name (name) → des Namens
- der Wille (will) → des Willens

Also:

- **das Herz** (neutral) follows the same pattern