



DELKI



GERMAN ARTICLES AND GENDER PATTERNS

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO PREDICTING DER, DIE, DAS

Common noun endings, meaning patterns,
exceptions, compound nouns, and
memory strategies

DELKI | Deutsch-Englisches Linguistik-Kulturinstitut



00 HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

German noun gender can feel random, but many endings and meaning groups give useful clues. Use the patterns to make an informed guess, then confirm the article in a reliable dictionary or course material.

THREE RULES THAT SAVE TIME

LEARN THE WHOLE NOUN UNIT

der Tisch - die Tische — table - tables

die Frage - die Fragen — question - questions

das Buch - die Bücher — book - books

- **Learn the article with the noun.** — Do not memorise Tisch alone; memorise der Tisch.
- **Treat endings as clues, not promises.** — Strong patterns are highly useful, but German still has exceptions.
- **Remember that all nominative plurals use die.** — der Tisch, die Frage, and das Buch become die Tische, die Fragen, and die Bücher.

The article expresses grammatical gender. It does not always match biological sex or real-world meaning.



01 THE THREE GENDERS AT A GLANCE

When learners speak about “the article”, they usually mean the nominative singular form used in a dictionary.

GENDER	ARTICLE	GERMAN	ENGLISH
Masculine	der	der Kurs	the course
Feminine	die	die Sprache	the language
Neuter	das	das Buch	the book
Plural	die	die Bücher	the books

INDEFINITE ARTICLES

GERMAN	ENGLISH
ein Kurs	a course
eine Sprache	a language
ein Buch	a book
keine Bücher	no books

IMPORTANT

das Mädchen — the girl - neuter because -chen always makes a noun neuter

die Person — the person - grammatically feminine, regardless of the person

das Mitglied — the member - grammatically neuter, regardless of the person



02 STRONG MASCULINE PATTERNS

These endings and meaning groups are among the most useful clues for predicting der.

PATTERN	GERMAN EXAMPLES	ENGLISH
-ling → der	der Frühling; der Lehrling; der Schmetterling	spring; apprentice; butterfly
-ismus → der	der Tourismus; der Kapitalismus; der Optimismus	tourism; capitalism; optimism
-ist → der	der Journalist; der Polizist; der Spezialist	journalist; police officer; specialist
-ant / -ent → der	der Praktikant; der Student; der Präsident	intern; student; president
-or → usually der	der Motor; der Professor; der Doktor	engine; professor; doctor
-ich → often der	der Teppich; der Bereich; der Strich	carpet; area; line
-ig → often der	der Honig; der Käfig; der Essig	honey; cage; vinegar

MEANING GROUPS THAT OFTEN USE DER

GROUP	GERMAN EXAMPLES	ENGLISH
Days	der Montag; der Freitag	Monday; Friday
Months	der Januar; der Oktober	January; October
Seasons	der Frühling; der Sommer; der Winter	spring; summer; winter
Compass points	der Norden; der Süden; der Westen	north; south; west
Many weather words	der Regen; der Schnee; der Wind	rain; snow; wind
Male people and animals	der Vater; der Bruder; der Hahn	father; brother; rooster



03 STRONG FEMININE PATTERNS

Feminine endings are especially reliable. Learning these patterns gives learners a large number of correct predictions.

PATTERN	GERMAN EXAMPLES	ENGLISH
-ung → die	die Wohnung; die Rechnung; die Erfahrung	apartment; invoice; experience
-heit → die	die Freiheit; die Gesundheit; die Sicherheit	freedom; health; safety
-keit → die	die Möglichkeit; die Schwierigkeit; die Geschwindigkeit	possibility; difficulty; speed
-schaft → die	die Freundschaft; die Gesellschaft; die Mannschaft	friendship; society/company; team
-ei → die	die Bäckerei; die Polizei; die Datei	bakery; police; file
-ion → die	die Information; die Situation; die Diskussion	information; situation; discussion
-tät → die	die Universität; die Qualität; die Aktivität	university; quality; activity
-ik → die	die Musik; die Politik; die Grammatik	music; politics; grammar
-ur → die	die Kultur; die Natur; die Reparatur	culture; nature; repair
-anz / -enz → die	die Distanz; die Toleranz; die Kompetenz	distance; tolerance; competence
-ie → die	die Energie; die Familie; die Theorie	energy; family; theory

A USEFUL SHORTCUT

-ung, -heit, -keit, -schaft — These four endings are among the strongest feminine signals in German.

die Entscheidung — the decision

die Sicherheit — the safety/security

die Möglichkeit — the possibility

die Freundschaft — the friendship



04 STRONG NEUTER PATTERNS

The endings -chen and -lein are always neuter. Several international endings are also usually neuter.

PATTERN	GERMAN EXAMPLES	ENGLISH
-chen → das	das Mädchen; das Brötchen; das Häuschen	girl; bread roll; little house
-lein → das	das Büchlein; das Häuslein; das Tischlein	little book; little house; little table
Infinitive as noun → das	das Essen; das Lernen; das Reisen	eating/food; learning; travelling
-ment → usually das	das Dokument; das Instrument; das Experiment	document; instrument; experiment
-um → usually das	das Museum; das Zentrum; das Studium	museum; centre; university studies
-ma → usually das	das Thema; das Klima; das Drama	topic; climate; drama
-o → often das	das Auto; das Kino; das Foto; das Büro	car; cinema; photo; office
Ge- nouns → often das	das Gebäude; das Gespräch; das Geschenk; das Gepäck	building; conversation; gift; luggage

NOMINALISED VERBS

lernen → das Lernen – to learn → learning

essen → das Essen – to eat → eating/food

reisen → das Reisen – to travel → travelling

Das Lernen braucht Zeit. – Learning takes time.



05 HELPFUL BUT TRICKY ENDINGS

These clues are useful only when you also learn the common exceptions. Do not rely on them alone.

PATTERN	GERMAN EXAMPLES	ENGLISH
-e → often die	die Straße; die Lampe; die Sprache; die Schule	street; lamp; language; school
-e exceptions	der Name; der Junge; der Kunde; der Käse; das Ende; das Auge	name; boy; customer; cheese; end; eye
-er → mixed	der Lehrer; das Fenster; das Messer; die Mutter; die Schwester	teacher; window; knife; mother; sister
-nis → often das	das Ergebnis; das Erlebnis; das Verhältnis; das Geheimnis	result; experience/event; relationship; secret
-nis exceptions	die Erlaubnis; die Kenntnis; die Erkenntnis	permission; knowledge; insight
-tum → mixed	das Eigentum; das Wachstum; der Reichtum; der Irrtum	property; growth; wealth; error
Ge- → helpful, not certain	das Gespräch; der Gedanke; die Geschichte; die Gefahr	conversation; thought; history/story; danger
-ment exception	der Moment	moment
-or exception	das Labor	laboratory
-ma exception	die Firma	company
-o exceptions	der Euro; die Avocado	euro; avocado

THE MOST IMPORTANT WARNING

-e — Many everyday nouns ending in -e are feminine, but several very common nouns are not.

die Sprache / der Name / das Ende — the language / the name / the end



06 PEOPLE, PROFESSIONS, AND GRAMMATICAL GENDER

Nouns for people may reflect natural gender, but some nouns keep one grammatical gender regardless of the person they describe.

GERMAN	ENGLISH
der Lehrer	male teacher
die Lehrerin	female teacher
der Kollege	male colleague
die Kollegin	female colleague
der Arzt	male doctor
die Ärztin	female doctor
die Person	person - grammatically feminine, regardless of the person
das Mitglied	member - grammatically neuter, regardless of the person
der Mensch	human being - grammatically masculine, regardless of the person
das Mädchen	girl - neuter because the ending -chen always makes the noun neuter

COMMON PROFESSION PAIRS

GERMAN	ENGLISH
der Lehrer / die Lehrerin	male teacher / female teacher
der Mitarbeiter / die Mitarbeiterin	male employee / female employee
der Student / die Studentin	male student / female student
der Arzt / die Ärztin	male doctor / female doctor
der Verkäufer / die Verkäuferin	male salesperson / female salesperson

The feminine form often adds -in. In the plural, the feminine form usually adds -innen: die Lehrerinnen - the female teachers.



07 COMPOUND NOUNS: THE LAST WORD DECIDES

German combines words to make longer nouns. The final noun controls the gender and the article of the complete word.

COMPOUND	PARTS	WHY?	ENGLISH
die Haustür	das Haus + die Tür	The final noun is die Tür.	front door
das Wohnzimmer	wohnen + das Zimmer	The final noun is das Zimmer.	living room
der Bahnhof	die Bahn + der Hof	The final noun is der Hof.	train station
die Sprachschule	die Sprache + die Schule	The final noun is die Schule.	language school
das Wörterbuch	die Wörter + das Buch	The final noun is das Buch.	dictionary
der Arbeitsplatz	die Arbeit + der Platz	The final noun is der Platz.	workplace
die Krankenversicherung	krank + die Versicherung	The final noun is die Versicherung.	health insurance
der Deutschkurs	Deutsch + der Kurs	The final noun is der Kurs.	German course

MEMORY RULE

Look right, not left. — The final noun is the head noun and determines the article.

die Krankenversicherung — health insurance - Versicherung is feminine, so the complete noun uses die.



08 GENDER DOES NOT CHANGE, BUT THE ARTICLE CAN

Cases change the form of the article. The noun remains masculine, feminine, neuter, or plural.

GENDER	NOMINATIVE	ACCUSATIVE	DATIVE
Masculine	der Kurs	den Kurs	dem Kurs
Feminine	die Schule	die Schule	der Schule
Neuter	das Buch	das Buch	dem Buch
Plural	die Bücher	die Bücher	den Büchern

MODEL SENTENCES

GERMAN	ENGLISH
Der Kurs beginnt heute.	The course begins today.
Ich besuche den Kurs.	I am attending the course.
Ich lerne in dem Kurs.	I am learning in the course.
Die Schule ist groß.	The school is large.
Ich lerne an der Schule.	I study at the school.

BEGINNER PRIORITY

Learn the nominative article first. — Start with der Kurs, die Schule, and das Buch.

Then learn case changes in complete phrases. — For example: mit dem Kurs - with the course.



09 A BETTER WAY TO LEARN ARTICLES

Do not memorise isolated English-German pairs. Build a memory package for each noun.

GERMAN	ENGLISH
der Termin - die Termine	appointment - appointments
Ich habe einen Termin.	I have an appointment.
die Wohnung - die Wohnungen	apartment - apartments
Die Wohnung ist hell.	The apartment is bright.
das Dokument - die Dokumente	document - documents
Ich brauche das Dokument.	I need the document.

THE FOUR-PART NOUN CARD

EXAMPLE CARD

die Wohnung – the apartment

Plural: die Wohnungen – plural: the apartments

Die Wohnung ist noch frei. – The apartment is still available.

Pattern: -ung → **usually die** – pattern: nouns ending in -ung are usually feminine

A FIVE-MINUTE REVIEW ROUTINE

- ☐ Look at the noun without the article and say der, die, or das aloud.
- ☐ Say the plural form.
- ☐ Use the noun in one short sentence.
- ☐ Check whether an ending or meaning pattern helped you.
- ☐ Write exceptions on a separate “tricky nouns” list.



10 PRACTICE 1: USE THE ENDING CLUE

Choose der, die, or das. The English meaning is included so you can focus on the gender pattern.

CHOOSE THE ARTICLE	ENGLISH
1. __ Wohnung	apartment
2. __ Freiheit	freedom
3. __ Möglichkeit	possibility
4. __ Freundschaft	friendship
5. __ Bäckerei	bakery
6. __ Information	information
7. __ Universität	university
8. __ Musik	music
9. __ Kultur	culture
10. __ Kompetenz	competence
11. __ Frühling	spring
12. __ Tourismus	tourism
13. __ Journalist	journalist
14. __ Student	student
15. __ Motor	engine
16. __ Brötchen	bread roll
17. __ Büchlein	little book
18. __ Dokument	document
19. __ Museum	museum
20. __ Lernen	learning



11 PRACTICE 1: ANSWERS

ANSWER	WHY?
1. die Wohnung	-ung is feminine.
2. die Freiheit	-heit is feminine.
3. die Möglichkeit	-keit is feminine.
4. die Freundschaft	-schaft is feminine.
5. die Bäckerei	-ei is feminine.
6. die Information	-ion is feminine.
7. die Universität	-tät is feminine.
8. die Musik	-ik is feminine.
9. die Kultur	-ur is feminine.
10. die Kompetenz	-enz is feminine.
11. der Frühling	-ling is masculine.
12. der Tourismus	-ismus is masculine.
13. der Journalist	-ist is masculine.
14. der Student	-ent is masculine.
15. der Motor	-or is usually masculine.
16. das Brötchen	-chen is always neuter.
17. das Büchlein	-lein is always neuter.
18. das Dokument	-ment is usually neuter.
19. das Museum	-um is usually neuter.
20. das Lernen	A nominalised infinitive is neuter.



12 PRACTICE 2: TRICKY NOUNS

These nouns test common exceptions and mixed endings.

CHOOSE THE ARTICLE	ENGLISH
1. __ Name	name
2. __ Ende	end
3. __ Mädchen	girl
4. __ Erlaubnis	permission
5. __ Ergebnis	result
6. __ Fenster	window
7. __ Mutter	mother
8. __ Honig	honey
9. __ Thema	topic
10. __ Moment	moment

ANSWERS

ANSWER	WHY?
1. der Name	Common -e exception.
2. das Ende	Common -e exception.
3. das Mädchen	-chen always makes a noun neuter.
4. die Erlaubnis	A feminine -nis exception.
5. das Ergebnis	-nis is often neuter.
6. das Fenster	-er is not a reliable gender rule.
7. die Mutter	-er is not a reliable gender rule.
8. der Honig	-ig is often masculine.
9. das Thema	-ma is usually neuter.
10. der Moment	A common -ment exception.



13 PRACTICE 3: COMPOUND NOUNS

Find the final noun, then choose the article for the complete compound.

CHOOSE THE ARTICLE	ENGLISH
1. Haus + die Tür = __ Haustür	front door
2. schlafen + das Zimmer = __ Schlafzimmer	bedroom
3. die Sprache + der Kurs = __ Sprachkurs	language course
4. die Arbeit + die Zeit = __ Arbeitszeit	working time
5. die Kinder + der Garten = __ Kindergarten	kindergarten
6. die Wörter + das Buch = __ Wörterbuch	dictionary
7. krank + die Versicherung = __ Krankenversicherung	health insurance
8. die Stadt + der Plan = __ Stadtplan	city map

ANSWERS

ANSWER	WHY?
1. die Haustür	The final noun is die Tür.
2. das Schlafzimmer	The final noun is das Zimmer.
3. der Sprachkurs	The final noun is der Kurs.
4. die Arbeitszeit	The final noun is die Zeit.
5. der Kindergarten	The final noun is der Garten.
6. das Wörterbuch	The final noun is das Buch.
7. die Krankenversicherung	The final noun is die Versicherung.
8. der Stadtplan	The final noun is der Plan.



14 YOUR PERSONAL GENDER-PATTERN SHEET

Use this page to collect nouns from your own lessons, work, appointments, and daily life.

Five nouns with strong feminine endings / Fünf Nomen mit starken femininen Endungen

Five nouns with strong masculine endings / Fünf Nomen mit starken maskulinen Endungen

Five neuter nouns / Fünf neutrale Nomen

Three compound nouns and their final nouns / Drei zusammengesetzte Nomen und ihre letzten Nomen

Five exceptions I need to remember / Fünf Ausnahmen, die ich mir merken muss



15 FINAL QUICK REFERENCE

Use this page as a fast review before homework, writing, or speaking practice.

CLUE	WHAT TO REMEMBER
Almost always der	-ling, -ismus; many -ist, -ant, -ent, -or nouns; days, months, seasons
Almost always die	-ung, -heit, -keit, -schaft, -ei, -ion, -tät, -ik, -ur, -anz, -enz, -ie
Always das	-chen, -lein; infinitives used as nouns
Usually das	-ment, -um, -ma; many Ge- nouns
Useful but risky	-e is often feminine; -er and -nis are mixed
Compound nouns	The last noun decides the article.
Plural	All nouns use die in the nominative plural.
Best habit	Learn article + noun + plural + one useful sentence.

THE CORE MEMORY SENTENCE

Learn der Tisch, not Tisch. — Learn the article as part of the noun.

Learn die Tische too. — Add the plural form.

Use the noun in a sentence. — A meaningful example makes the gender easier to retrieve.



16 LEARN PRACTICAL GERMAN WITH DELKI

At DELKI, we help learners understand German grammar in small, practical steps and use it confidently in real situations.

Our lessons combine clear explanations, useful vocabulary, speaking practice, correction, and a personalised learning system. We do not only teach rules. We teach you how to remember and use them.

START YOUR GERMAN PLAN

Set up a free consultation to discuss your German goals, target role, and interview preparation needs.

delki.org

Email: admin@delki.org

WhatsApp/SMS: +49 163 1462160

DELKI • Deutsch-Englisches Linguistik-Kulturinstitut