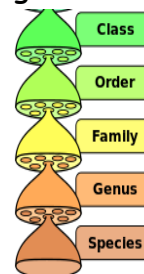


What does "Gender" mean?

Gender is a foreign concept to English speakers (at least in the realm of grammar!) because it doesn't show up as much in English.

In grammar, "gender" has nothing to do with male and female. It simply means "type" or "group" (along the line of "genus" in biology). Confusingly, some languages, such as German and Icelandic, call these groups "masculine, feminine, and neuter."



Danish does not do this, but it does have two genders called "common" (shown by the article **en**) and "neuter" (shown by **et**).

All nouns have a gender in Danish: roughly 75% are common, and 25% neuter.

You can not usually predict which gender will go with a given noun. You have to look it up and memorize it. Here are some examples:

<u>COMMON</u>		<u>NEUTER</u>	
en sang	a song	et hus	a house
en bog	a book	et vindue	a window
en bjørn	a bear	et system	a system
en skole	a school	et land	a country

Danish Articles (see next page) "carry" the gender of a noun, (as do adjectives).

In English, an article standing alone will give you no clue about the following word except that it is a noun. For example: "a _____." The word that fills in the blank could be practically any noun!

But when native Danish speakers see an article standing alone, they automatically know that some nouns could follow it, and others never could. For example: "et _____."

From the list above you know that the next word might be

hus...



...but it can't be **bjørn!**



What is an "Article"?

An article associates with a noun to indicate the noun's gender and its "degree of specificity," or it's "known-ness" to the listener.

The specific or already-known noun is called **definite**. [Indicated by "the"].

The general or not-yet-mentioned noun is called **indefinite**. [Shown by "a/an"].

Specificity

Before you buy one, you think of cars in *general* - a given car in the world of cars: "I want a car with style, a car with speed, a car with good gas mileage."

You shop around and finally choose a *specific* car:



The car with style,



the car with speed,



or the car with good gas mileage!

Knownness

When the listener is likely to know what the speaker is referring to (normally because the subject has been mentioned or implied before), then the definite is usually used.

For example:

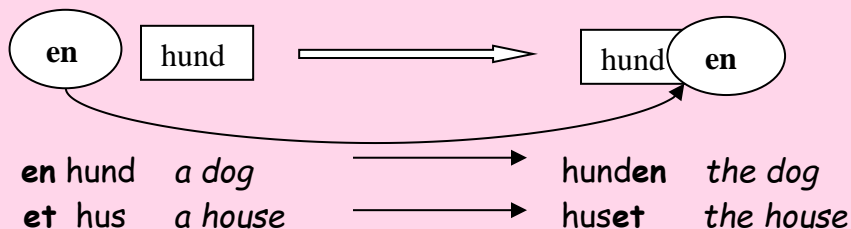
- 1) I saw a dog outside. I wonder if the dog belongs to my neighbor.
- 2) I'm taking a Danish class. The class is really cool!

Danish creates the indefinite by putting the appropriate article in front of the noun.

For example:	en hund	a dog
	et hus	a house



Danish creates the definite by attaching the article to the end of the noun:



nifty, eh?