Nouns

Grammatical Gender

In words, such as student, studentka, doktor, doktorka or profesor, profesorka, the natural gender is reflected (student, doktor and profesor are men, studentka, doktorka and profesorka are women). This natural gender is logical for example in people and animals. All Czech nouns though have their grammatical gender and for most of them there is no logical explanation of it.

Nouns have three grammatical genders:

* masculine (we distinguish masculine animate – people and animals, for example student, muž, and masculine inanimate, for example obchod)
* feminine (for example school)
* neuter (for example kino)

The Identification of the Noun Gender

It is important to know the gender of each noun. There is a practical clue to identify the noun gender. Remember:

66 % of nouns have these majority endings in the nominative singular:

* Masculine words end in consonant (for example student, muž, učitel, obchod, supermarket, počítač...).
* Feminine words end in -a (for example škola, káva, studentka, profesorka, učitelka, banka...).
* Neuter words end in -o (for example kino, auto, město, pivo, metro...).

34 % of nouns have different, minority endings in the nominative singular:

* The ending -e/-ě very often appears in feminine words (restaurace, stanice, sportovkyně, kolegyně ...) but also in neuter words (parkoviště, kuře) and rarely in masculine words (soudce).
* The ending -í very often appears in neuter words (for example nádraží, náměstí).
* The ending -a can appear also in masculine words (kolega, chleba) whereas the consonant ending can appear in feminine words (kancelář, místnost).

The gender of nouns with minority endings has to be memorized. But with time you will get used to identifying noun genders according to their ending in nominative singular and you will learn to identify the gender of almost all nouns.

The Role of Grammatical Gender in the Language System

Why is it important to know the grammatical gender of each new noun you have learnt (it means to know whether it is a masculine, feminine or neuter)? Because the noun gender affects not only the declension of each noun, but also some other parts of speech. For example, compare the following sentences:

Byl jednou jeden dobrý král a ten se jmenoval Karel.
Byl jednou jeden velký hrad a ten se jmenoval Karlštejn.
Byla jednou jedna dobrá královna a ta se jmenovala Anna.
Bylo jednou jedno velké město a to se jmenovalo Brno.

Below you can see grammar items influenced by the noun gender.

| in singular |
| --- |
|  | **masculine animate** | **masculine inanimate** | **feminine** | **neuter** |
| Nouns | student | obchod | škola | kino |
| Adjectives | dobrý (dobrej)\* | dobrý (dobrej)\* | dobrá | dobré (dobrý)\* |
| past tense | byl jsem | byl jsem | byla jsem | bylo jsem |
| conditional | byl bych | byl bych | byla bych | bylo bych |
| The numeral jedna | jeden | jeden | jedna | jedno |
| Possessive Pronouns | můj, tvůj, náš, váš | můj, tvůj, náš, váš | moje, tvoje, naše, vaše | moje, tvoje, naše, vaše |
| Demonstrative Pronouns | ten | ten | ta | to |
| Descriptive Passive Voice | je dělán | je dělán | je dělána | je děláno |
| in plural |
|  | **masculine animate** | **masculine inanimate** | **feminine** | **neuter** |
| Nouns | studenti | obchody | školy | kina |
| Adjectives | dobří (dobrý)\* | dobré (dobrý)\* | dobré (dobrý)\* | dobrá (dobrý)\* |
| past tense | byli jsme | byly jsme | byly jsme | byla (byly)\* jsme |
| conditional | byli bychom | byly bychom | byly bychom | byla (byly)\* bychom... |
| The numeral dva | dva | dva | dvě | dvě |
| Possessive Pronouns | moji, tvoji, naši, vaši | moje, tvoje, naše, vaše | moje, tvoje, naše, vaše | moje, tvoje, naše, vaše |
| Demonstrative Pronouns | ti (ty)\* | ty | ty | ta(ty)\* |
| Descriptive Passive Voice | jsou děláni | jsou dělány | jsou dělány | jsou dělána |

*\* These forms are typical for the commonly spoken language.*

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