

# Noun Forms

In the Norwegian language, nouns are classified into three grammatical genders: masculine, feminine, and neuter.

## HOW CAN YOU TELL WHAT GENDER A NOUN IS?

Typically, we can't determine the gender of a noun just by looking at it. You must learn and memorize the gender of each individual noun. Many language learners find flash cards useful to memorize genders. Here are other helpful tips.

All feminine nouns in Norwegian can also be treated as masculine. For instance, one can say "ei dør – døra" (feminine) or "en dør – døren" (masculine). We will treat all feminine nouns as masculine throughout our lessons to make things easier for everyone.

Approximately 25% of nouns belong to the neuter category. Prioritize learning these and you can treat the rest as masculine. You can find the most commonly used neuter nouns here: [\(LINK TO NEUTER NOUN ARTICLE\)](#)

An Observational Clue: Nouns ending in -sjon, -ning, -het, or -else in Norwegian typically fall under the masculine category.

## NOUN FORMS

In the Norwegian language, there are four distinct noun forms divided in two categories: singular and plural, and indefinite and definite (known as "ubestemt" and "bestemt" in Norwegian).

SINGULAR		PLURAL	
INDEFINITE	DEFINITE	INDEFINITE	DEFINITE

Like in English, in the indefinite singular form, a noun typically requires an article before it, such as "en," "ei," or "et" (equivalent to "a/an" in English).

The noun also takes an article in the definite form, both in singular and plural. In English, the definite article is a separate word, "the," whereas in Norwegian, we use a suffix.

## MASCULINE

There are three different patterns for inflecting a masculine noun. The majority of masculine nouns follow this main pattern:

SINGULAR		PLURAL	
INDEFINITE	DEFINITE	INDEFINITE	DEFINITE
<u>en</u> gutt (a boy)	gut <u>ten</u> (the boy)	gut <u>ter</u> (boys)	gut <u>tene</u> (the boys)
<u>en</u> kopp (a cup)	kopp <u>en</u> (the cup)	kopp <u>er</u> (cups)	kopp <u>ene</u> (the cups)

However, masculine nouns ending in \_el follow a different pattern. Here, in addition to adding the article, you also contract the plural forms:



SINGULAR		PLURAL	
INDEFINITE	DEFINITE	INDEFINITE	DEFINITE
<u>en</u> onkel (an uncle)	onkel <u>en</u> (the uncle)	onk <u>ler</u> (uncles)	onk <u>lene</u> (the uncles)
<u>en</u> sykkel (a bike)	sykk <u>elen</u> (the bike)	syk <u>ler</u> (bikes)	syk <u>lene</u> (the bikes)

Masculine nouns ending in \_er also have a different inflection in the plural. These nouns are usually used to referred to people, such as nationalities and occupations.

SINGULAR		PLURAL	
INDEFINITE	DEFINITE	INDEFINITE	DEFINITE
<u>en</u> sykepleier (a nurse)	sykepleie <u>ren</u> (the nurse)	sykepleie <u>re</u> (nurses)	sykepleie <u>rne</u> (the nurses)
<u>en</u> amerikaner (an American)	amerikaner <u>en</u> (the Americans)	amerikaner <u>e</u> (Americans)	amerikaner <u>ne</u> (the Americans)

NEUTER

Neuter nouns can be classified into two groups. The key question is: How many syllables does the noun have in its singular, indefinite form? Typically, a word has the same number of syllables as vowels or groups of vowels.

-  barn      one vowel      ➡      one syllable
-  vin-du      two vowels      ➡      two syllables
-  ek-sem-pel      three vowels      ➡      three syllables

Neuter nouns with two or more syllables follow this main pattern:

SINGULAR		PLURAL	
INDEFINITE	DEFINITE	INDEFINITE	DEFINITE
<u>et</u> vindu (a window)	vinduet (the windows)	vinduer (windows)	vinduene (the windows)
<u>et</u> hotell (a hotel)	hotellet (the hotel)	hoteller (hotels)	hotellene (the hotels)

For shorter one-syllable neuter nouns, you don't add the \_er at the end of the indefinite plural:

SINGULAR		PLURAL	
INDEFINITE	DEFINITE	INDEFINITE	DEFINITE
<u>et</u> land (a country)	landet (the country)	land (countries)	landene (the countries)
<u>et</u> kurs (a course)	kurset (the course)	kurs (courses)	kursene (the courses)

IRREGULAR NOUNS

There are, of course, nouns that don't quite fit into any of these categories. You can find a list of them here: (LINK TO IRREGULAR NOUN ARTICLE)



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