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Lezione 3

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Nouns

Gender and number

In the German language, nouns have three grammatical genders: masculine (M), feminine (F), and neuter (N).

The following list contains all the nouns in the first part of our text. The definite article in front of the singular noun indicates the gender:

der (M), *die* (F), *das* (N)

In the plural (PL), all nouns have the same article (*die*). This means that there is no gender distinction in the plural.

This is why the article is never placed before a plural word in the list.

girl	Mädchen	Mädchen (girl)
dolls	Puppen	Puppen (dolls)
dream	Träume	Träume (dreams)
mountain village	Bergdorf	Bergdorf(mountain village)
beach	Meeresstrand	Meeresstrand (beach)
sea	Meer	Meer (sea)
country	Land	Land (country)
people	Leute	Leute (people)
language	Sprache	Sprache (language)
dreams	Träume	Träume(dreams)
years	Jahre	Jahre (years)
big ugly man	Riesenkerl	Riesenkerl (big ugly man)
six-foot man	Zweimetermann	Zweimetermann (six-foot man)
arms	Arme	Arme (arms)

doll	Puppe	Puppe (doll)
tiny creature	Würmchen	Würmchen (tiny creature)
angel face	Engelsgesicht	Engelsgesicht (angel face)
spasms	Krämpfe	Krämpfe (spasms)
little body	Körperchen	Körperchen (little body)
disease	Morbus	Morbus (disease)
name	Name	Name (name)
doctor	Arzt	Arzt(doctor)
glory	Ruhm	Ruhm(glory)
forms	Formen	Formen (forms)
child	Kind	Kind(child)

Forming the plural

The second list contains the plural nouns of Pirandello's entire 600-word text.

The definite article of the plural nominative is *die*, whatever the noun's gender.

The first six nouns in the list belong to the first part (see the first list). The two words Fenster and Finger are found in the second part, while the last six nouns are found in the third and final part of the text.

Read and listen. Always remember to write down the words. We advise you to read out loud as you write.

dolls	Puppen	Puppen(dolls)
people	Leute	Leute(people)
dreams	Träume	Träume(dreams)
years	Jahre	Jahre(years)
arms	Arme	Arme(arms)
spasms	Krämpfe	Krämpfe(spasms)
forms	Formen	Formen(forms)
windows	Fenster	Fenster(windows)
fingers	Finger	Finger(fingers)
lips	Lippen	Lippen(lips)

ghosts

Geister

Geister(ghosts)

mountains

Berge

Berge(mountains)

In German there are five possible endings to form the plural.

Our excerpt gives examples of the first four plural endings, which are in fact the most commonly used to form the plural.

Umlauts are often added to the plural.

1. - ø

Fenster, Finger(windows, fingers)

2. -n/-en

Puppen, Formen, Lippen(dolls, forms, lips)

3. -e

Träume, Jahre, Berge(dreams, years, mountains)

4. -er

Geister(ghosts)

5. -s

There are no plural nouns ending in -s in the text of Pirandello.

The Nominative (NOM)

The nominative is the case of the subject and the nominal part of the nominal predicate.

The person, animal or object expressed in the nominative does the action described by the verb.

They answer questions introduced by interrogative pronouns: *wer* or *was* ('who' or 'what').

Was ist das Leben? Ein Hauch.

Was ist das Leben? Ein Hauch. (How flimsy life is! A breath.)

Here is the list of nouns that take on the role of subject in the second part of the text.

The order follows the plot of the story. The article helps you to identify the gender, number and case of the noun.

the room	das Zimmer	das Zimmer(the room)
the two windows	die zwei Fenster	die zwei Fenster(the two windows)
the mother	die Mutter	die Mutter(the mother)
the child	das Kind	das Kind(the child)
a breath	ein Hauch	ein Hauch(a breath)
your husband	dein Mann	dein Mann(your husband)
a giant	ein Riese	ein Riese(a giant)
the certainty	die Gewissheit	die Gewissheit(the certainty)

Good to know!

There are two exercises after this lesson.

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