

## NOUN GENDER

Words such as *student*, *studentka*, *doktor*, *doktorka* and *profesor*, *profesorka* reflect the natural gender (*student*, *doktor*, and *profesor* are *male*; (*studentka*, *doktorka* and *profesorka* are *female*). This natural gender is logical, for example, in humans and animals.

However, other nouns in Czech have a grammatical gender that has no logical justification. Czech nouns have three grammatical genders:

- **masculine** gender (we distinguish between the **masculine animate gender** - persons and animals, e.g. *student*, *muž*, and the **masculine inanimate gender**, e.g. *byt*, *měsíc*)
- **feminine gender** (e.g. *škola*)
- **neutral gender** (e.g. *město*).

### Identification of noun gender

It is important to know the gender of each noun. There are some tips for determining the gender of nouns:

1) 66% of nouns have the following majorendings in the nominative singular:

- the masculine gender ends in a consonant (e.g. *student*, *muž*, *učitel*, *byt*, *supermarket*, *měsíc*)
- the feminine gender ends with an *-a* (e.g. *škola*, *káva*, *studentka*, *profesorka*, *učitelka*, *banka*)
- the neutral gender ends with an *-o* (e.g. *kino*, *auto*, *město*, *pivo*, *metro*).

2) 34% of nouns have other, minor endings, in the nominative singular:

- the ending *-e/ě* is very often found in feminine gender (e.g. *restaurace*, *židle*, *sportovkyně*, *kolegyně*), as well as in the neutral gender (*moře*, *parkoviště*), but rarely in the masculine (*soudce*)
- the ending *-í* is typical for nouns of the neutral gender (e.g. *nádraží*, *náměstí*)
- the ending *-a* can also appear in the masculine gender (*kolega*, *chleba*), while the consonant can also appear in the feminine (*kancelář*, *místnost*).

You must memorize the gender of nouns with minor endings. However, over time you will gain practice in determining the gender of almost all nouns by the ending of the nominative singular.

### The role of grammatical gender in system of the language

Why is it important to know the grammatical gender of each new noun you learn (i.e. whether it is masculine, feminine or neutral)?

Because the gender of noun affects not only the declension of each noun, but also some other word types.

For example, compare these sentences:

Byl jeden dobrý král a ten se jmenoval Karel.

Byl jeden velký hrad a ten se jmenoval Karlštejn.

Byla jedna dobrá královna a ta se jmenovala Anna.

Bylo jedno velké město a to se jmenovalo Brno.

There was a good king, and his name was Charles.

There was a big castle and it was called Karlštejn.

There was a good queen and her name was Anna.

There was a big city and it was called Brno.

| Gender                 |                                                             |                          |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| MASCULINE<br>animate   | <u>ten</u>                                                  | demonstrative<br>pronoun |
|                        | <u>jeden</u>                                                | base numeral             |
|                        | <u>NOVÝ, CIZÍ</u>                                           | adjectives               |
|                        | <u>můj, tvůj, jeho, její</u><br><u>náš, váš, jejich</u>     | possessive<br>pronouns   |
|                        | <u>STUDENT, MUŽ</u>                                         | noun                     |
| MASCULINE<br>inanimate | <u>ten</u>                                                  | demonstrative<br>pronoun |
|                        | <u>jeden</u>                                                | base numeral             |
|                        | <u>NOVÝ, CIZÍ</u>                                           | adjectives               |
|                        | <u>můj, tvůj, jeho, její</u><br><u>náš, váš, jejich</u>     | possessive<br>pronouns   |
|                        | <u>BYT, MĚSÍC</u>                                           | noun                     |
| FEMININE               | <u>ta</u>                                                   | demonstrative<br>pronoun |
|                        | <u>jedna</u>                                                | base numeral             |
|                        | <u>nová, cizí</u>                                           | adjectives               |
|                        | <u>moje, tvoje, jeho, její</u><br><u>naše, vaše, jejich</u> | possessive<br>pronouns   |
|                        | <u>ŽENA, ŽIDLE</u><br><u>SKŘÍŇ, KOST</u>                    | noun                     |
| NEUTRAL                | <u>to</u>                                                   | demonstrative<br>pronoun |
|                        | <u>jedno</u>                                                | base numeral             |
|                        | <u>nové, cizí</u>                                           | adjectives               |
|                        | <u>moje, tvoje, jeho, její</u><br><u>naše, vaše, jejich</u> | possessive<br>pronouns   |
|                        | <u>MĚSTO, MOŘE</u><br><u>NÁDRAŽÍ</u>                        | noun                     |