**DETERMINING THE GENDER OF SPANISH NOUNS**

Unlike English, all nouns in Spanish are either masculine or feminine. Of course,male persons or animals are masculine, and female persons or animals are feminine.

To determine the gender [sex] of other nouns, the following rules are helpful:

1. Words that end in ***-o*** are generally ***masculine***.

*el libro the book el piso the floor*

2. Words that end in ***-a*** are generally ***feminine***.

*la ventana the window la puerta the door*

3. Other ***feminine*** endings are: ***-ción*** *(la lección - the lesson)*, ***-sión*** *(la ilusión - the illusion)*, ***-dad*** *(la ciudad - the city)*,***-tad*** *(la dificultad - the difficulty)*, ***-tud*** *(la virtud - the virtue)*, ***-umbre*** *(la costumbre - the custom)*.

4. Words that end in ***-nte*** or ***-ista***, referring to a specific person, can be either ***masculine or feminine***.

*el estudiante student [male] la estudiante student [female]*

*el dentista dentist [male] la dentista dentist [female]*

**RULES FOR MAKING SPANISH NOUNS PLURAL**

The rules for making nouns plural in Spanish are quite simple, and are similar to English patterns.

1. If a noun ***ends in a vowel*** (a, e, i, o, u), it is made plural by adding ***-s***.

*el chico los chicos la chica las chicas*

2. If a noun ***ends in a consonant*** [except for the letter z], it is made plural by adding ***-es***.

*el dolor los dolores la flor las flores*

3. If a noun ***ends in -z***, change the ***-z to -c*** and add ***-es***.

la luz las luces la nariz las narices

4. The following are exceptions which are useful to know:

Sometimes a ***masculine plural noun*** refers to both male and female persons.

*los padres the parents, the mother and father*

Generally, a noun that ***ends in -ión*** drops the accent mark in the plural.

*la lección the lesson las lecciones the lessons*

Generally, a noun that ***ends in -és*** drops the accent mark in the plural.

*el francés the Frenchman los franceses the Frenchmen*

Sometimes the ***accent mark is kept in the plural*** in order to keep the stress where it is in the singular.

*el país the country los países the countries*

Some nouns have a plural ending but are regarded as singular because they are ***compound nouns***.

*el paraguas the umbrella los paraguas the umbrellas*

Generally speaking, a noun that ***ends in -s in the singular with no stress on the final syllable*** remains the same in the plural.

*el lunes Monday los lunes Mondays*

Generally speaking, a noun that ***ends in -s in the singular with the stress on that syllable*** requires the addition of an -es to form the plural.

*el mes the month los meses the months*

Some nouns that contain no accent mark in the singular ***require an accent mark in the plural*** to retain the singular pronunciation.

*el joven the young man los jóvenes the young men*