

caption,
rascal,
patriot,
glutton.

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CHAPTER 6

THE NOUN: GENDER

25. You know that living beings are of either the male or the female sex. Now compare the words in the following pairs:

Boy (Lion, Hero, Cock-sparrow)

Girl (Lioness, Heroine, Hen-sparrow)

What do you notice?

The first word of each pair is the name of a male animal.

The second word of each pair is the name of a female animal.

A noun that denotes a male animal is said to be of the Masculine Gender. [Gender comes from Latin genus, kind or sort.]

A noun that denotes a female animal is said to be of the Feminine Gender.

26. A noun that denotes either a male or a female is said to be of the Common Gender; as Parent, child, friend, pupil, servant, thief, relation, enemy, cousin, person, orphan, student, baby, monarch, neighbour, infant.

27. A noun that denotes a thing that is neither male nor female (i.e., thing without life) is said to be of the Neuter Gender; as,

Book, pen, room, tree.

[Neuter means neither, that is, neither male nor female]

It will be thus seen that in Modern English the Gender of a noun is entirely a matter of sex or the absence of sex. It has nothing to do with the form of a noun, which determines its gender in many other languages, e.g., in Urdu where bagiche is masculine and lakri is feminine.

28. Objects without life are often personified, that is, spoken of as if they were living beings. We then regard them as males or females.

The Masculine Gender is often applied to objects remarkable for strength and violence; as, The Sun, Summer, Winter, Time, Death,
The sun sheds his beams on rich and poor alike.

The Feminine Gender is sometimes applied to objects remarkable for beauty, gentleness, and gracefulness; as,
The Moon, the Earth, Spring, Autumn, Nature, Liberty, Justice, Mercy, Peace, Hope, Charity.