

## Nouns and Gender

Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, like many languages, has grammatical gender. Grammatical gender doesn't really have anything to do with the thing itself most of the time. For example, the word for "book" (knjiga) might be a feminine noun, but that doesn't mean that books are inherently feminine. That said, sometimes grammatical gender does coincide with the meaning of the word itself. For example, there's the word "profesor," but if we're talking about a woman who is a professor, it would have a feminine ending: "profesorka" for Serbian, and "profesorica" for Bosnian and Croatian.

There are three grammatical genders in BCS, masculine, feminine, and neuter. You can determine the gender of a noun by looking at the ending of the noun.

Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
Masculine nouns end in consonants.	Feminine nouns end in "a"	Neuter nouns end in "o" or "e"
Udžbenik, prozor, pas	Knjiga, mačka, prodavnica	Polje, pismo, pitanje

Having said all of that, there are MANY feminine nouns that also end in a consonant. I'll be referring to these as F2 nouns. More often than not, there isn't any way to tell the difference between these nouns and masculine nouns. However, there are many F2 nouns that end with the cluster of letters "-ost." If a noun ends in this cluster, it's guaranteed to be an F2 noun. Some examples of F2 nouns: ljubav, stvar, književnost, Mladost, starost.

Sometimes masculine nouns referring to people end in "a", like the word "tata," which means "dad." But all the adjectives that modify these nouns will be in the masculine form, which brings me to the next point.

**All adjectives and other words used to describe nouns will change according to the gender of the noun.** Some examples:

Dobra knjiga. *A good book.*

Dobar udžbenik. *A good textbook.* (Sometimes you'll see masc. adj. that end in "-i". I'll explain in class.)

Dobro pitanje. *A good question.*

Furthermore, words like "my," "your," "his," etc., will also change according to the gender of the noun. We'll go into this in more detail later. Just remember that whenever there's a word describing a noun, it has to *agree* with that noun in gender. (And as we'll later see, it also has to agree with the noun in number and case, but don't worry about this just yet.)

So, with that in mind, when we have a word like "tata" which is masculine but has a feminine ending, all the adjectives we use to describe it will be in the masculine form. For example: "moj dobar tata" would be "my good dad." Likewise, when adjectives modify F2 nouns, they'll just change like any other feminine adjective: "zanimljiva književnost," "dobra ljubav," etc. And lastly, sometimes neuter adjectives will end in "-e". (I can't think of any at the moment, but they exist!)