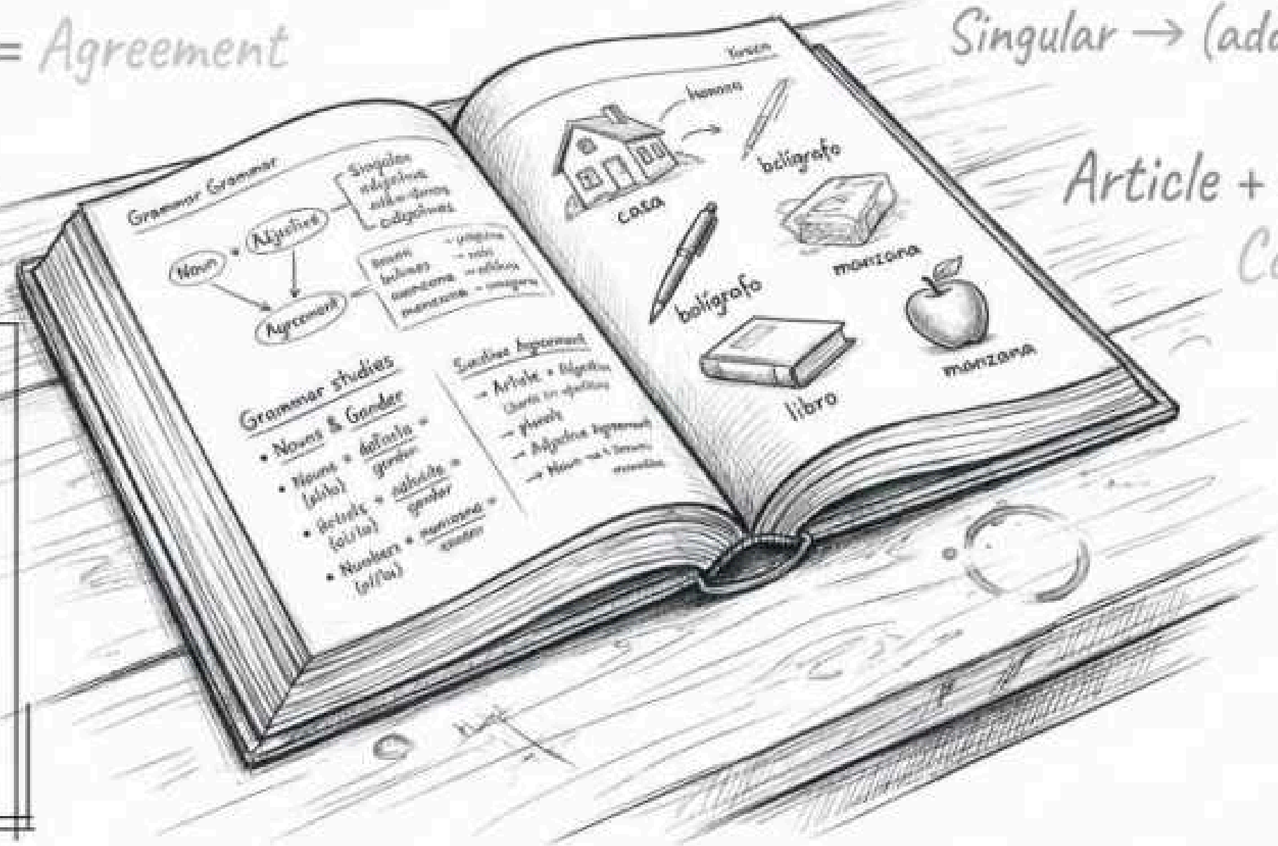
SPAN 101 B — Nouns, Articles, Adjectives, and Numbers

Noun + Adjective = Agreement

[el/la] + [Noun] = Gender

Singular → (add -s/-es) → Plural

Article + Noun + Adjective = Concordance



Lecture 2 Blueprint

- Nouns & Gender
- Articles (Definite/Indefinite)
- Plurals
- Adjective Agreement
- Numbers (0–100)

Gender is Grammatical, Not Physical

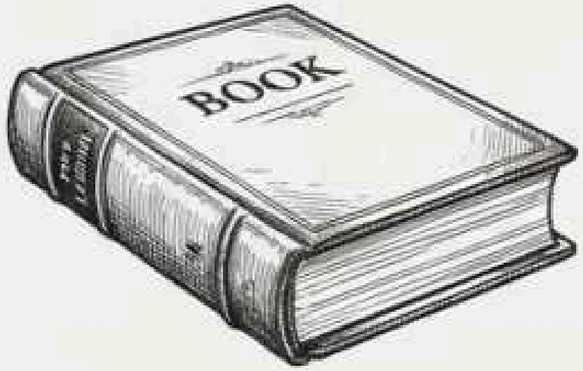
Grammatical Label ≠ Physical Trait



La mesa (The table)

↓

Feminine



El libro (The book)

↓

Masculine

Rule: Every Spanish noun is assigned a gender: either Masculine or Feminine.
Learning Goals: Predict gender, form plurals, describe with adjectives, and count to 30+.

The Golden Rule of Gender Prediction

-o

→ Usually Masculine

el libro,
el amigo,
el perro



-a

→ Usually Feminine

la casa,
la amiga,
la mesa



Best Practice: Always learn the noun together with its article.

Notable Exceptions to the Rule

Variables & Exceptions

Masculine ending in -a

el día (day),
el mapa (map),
el problema (problem)

~~la mapa~~ ✓
el mapa



Feminine ending in -o

la mano (hand),
la foto (photo)



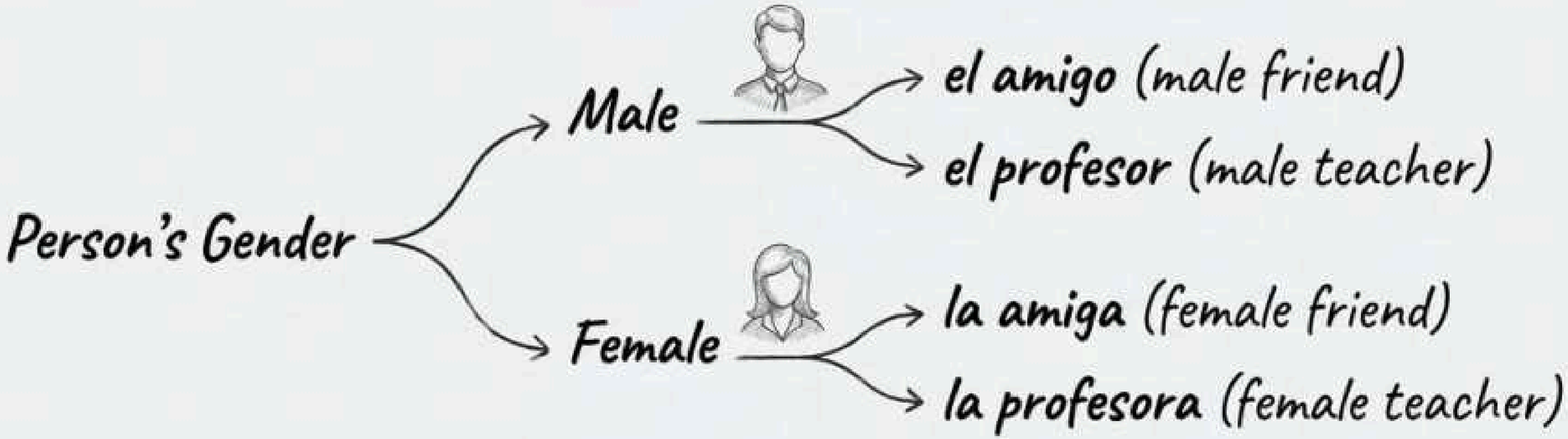
Feminine Suffix Formulas

Words ending in -ción, -sión, -dad,-tad = Feminine

la canción, la ciudad

Biological vs. Grammatical Gender for People

Rule: For people, the ending usually follows the person.



Invariant Nouns

[el / la] + estudiante = Constant

One form for both genders; only the article changes (el estudiante / la estudiante).

Definite Articles (The)

English = 1 word.
Spanish = 4 forms.

	Masculine	Feminine	
Singular	**el** (*el* libro)	**la** (*la* casa)	**the**
Plural	**los** (*los* libros)	**las** (*las* casas)	**the**

Indefinite Articles (A, An, Some)

Follows the identical structural pattern as definite articles.

	Masculine	Feminine	
Singular	**un** (un libro - a book)	**una** (una casa - a house)	a / an
Plural	**unos** (unos libros - some books)	**unas** (unas casas - some houses)	some

The Pluralization Algorithm

IF noun ends in in a **Vowel**	→ Add **s**	casa → casas | libro → libros
IF noun ends in in a **Consonant**	→ Add **es**	ciudad → ciudades | papel → papeles
IF noun ends in in **z**	→ **z = c + es**	lápiz → lápices

Note: Accents may shift to maintain original stress (canción → canciones).

The Two Rules of Adjectives

Rule 1: Agreement. Adjectives must perfectly match the noun in both *gender* and *number*.

Rule 2: Placement. Adjectives usually appear after the noun.

Noun *[Gender/Number]* → **Adjective** *[Matches Gender/Number]*

un chic**o** al**to** (a tall boy)

una chic**a** al**ta** (a tall girl)

unos chic**os** al**tos** (tall boys)

unas chic**as** al**tas** (tall girls)

Adjective Endings: 4 Forms vs. 2 Forms

4-Form Adjectives

Ends in "**-o**". Changes for both gender and number.



2-Form Adjectives

Ends in "**-e**" or a Consonant. Changes for number only (gender-neutral).

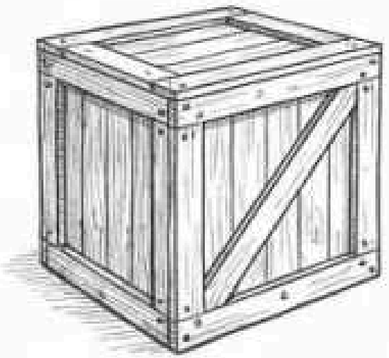
inteligente → inteligentes

(*un chico inteligente, una chica inteligente*)

difícil → difíciles

(*un examen difícil*)

Core Vocabulary: Everyday Adjectives



grande (big) ⟷ pequeño (small)



bueno (good) ⟷ malo (bad)

nuevo (new) ⟷ viejo (old)

bonito (pretty) ⟷ feo (ugly)

Stand-alone

simpático (nice)
interesante (interesting)
fácil (easy)

Action Prompt: Say each aloud with a noun (e.g., una casa pequeña).

Sound Adjustments Before Nouns

A few adjectives change form or meaning when placed before the noun.

bueno – o = buen

malo – o = mal

Drop the final “o” before a masculine singular noun.

→ un buen amigo

→ un mal día

grande → gran

Becomes gran before a singular noun, shifting meaning from “big” to “great”.

→ un gran libro (a great book)

Adjectives of Nationality

¶ 2.13



Rule: Nationalities are never capitalized in Spanish.

~~Spanish~~

~~Español~~ ~~E~~

español / española (from Spain)
mexicano (from Mexico)
americano, francés, alemán, chino, inglés

Consonant Rule: Consonant + a = Feminine
Example: inglés + a = inglesa

Asking, Declaring, and Existence

Description

¿Cómo es?

= What is it like?

Definition

¿Qué es?

= What is it?

Existence – The Universal Constant

Hay = There is / There are (never changes form).

- ***Hay un libro en la mesa.*** *(There is a book on the table.)*
- ***Hay tres libros.*** *(There are three books.)*

Rule: Use ***hay*** whenever listing what exists in a place.

Counting: 0 – 20

The Base — 0–10: cero, uno, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco, seis, siete, ocho, nueve, diez.

The -ce Group — 11–15: once, doce, trece, catorce, quince.

The Compound Group — 16–19: dieciséis, diecisiete, dieciocho, diecinueve.

The Pivot — 20: veinte.

Study Note: Numbers need repetition more than most vocabulary. Read these aloud twice.

The Mathematics of Counting to 100

[Tens] + y + [Ones]

The Rules:

21–29 (Single word):
***veintiuno*, *veintidós*, *veintitrés*...**

30+ (Separate words):
Joined by the letter 'y' (meaning 'and').
treinta y uno (31), ***cuarenta y dos*** (42)

The Tens Matrix:

30: treinta	40: cuarenta	50: cincuenta
60: sesenta	70: setenta	80: ochenta
90: noventa	100: cien	

Numbers in Context: Nouns and Age

Number/Noun Agreement: Only the number "one" changes based on gender before nouns.

un libro, una casa dos libros, dos casas, veintiún libros

Expressing Age

Age ~~=~~ To Be **Age = Tener + [Number] + años**

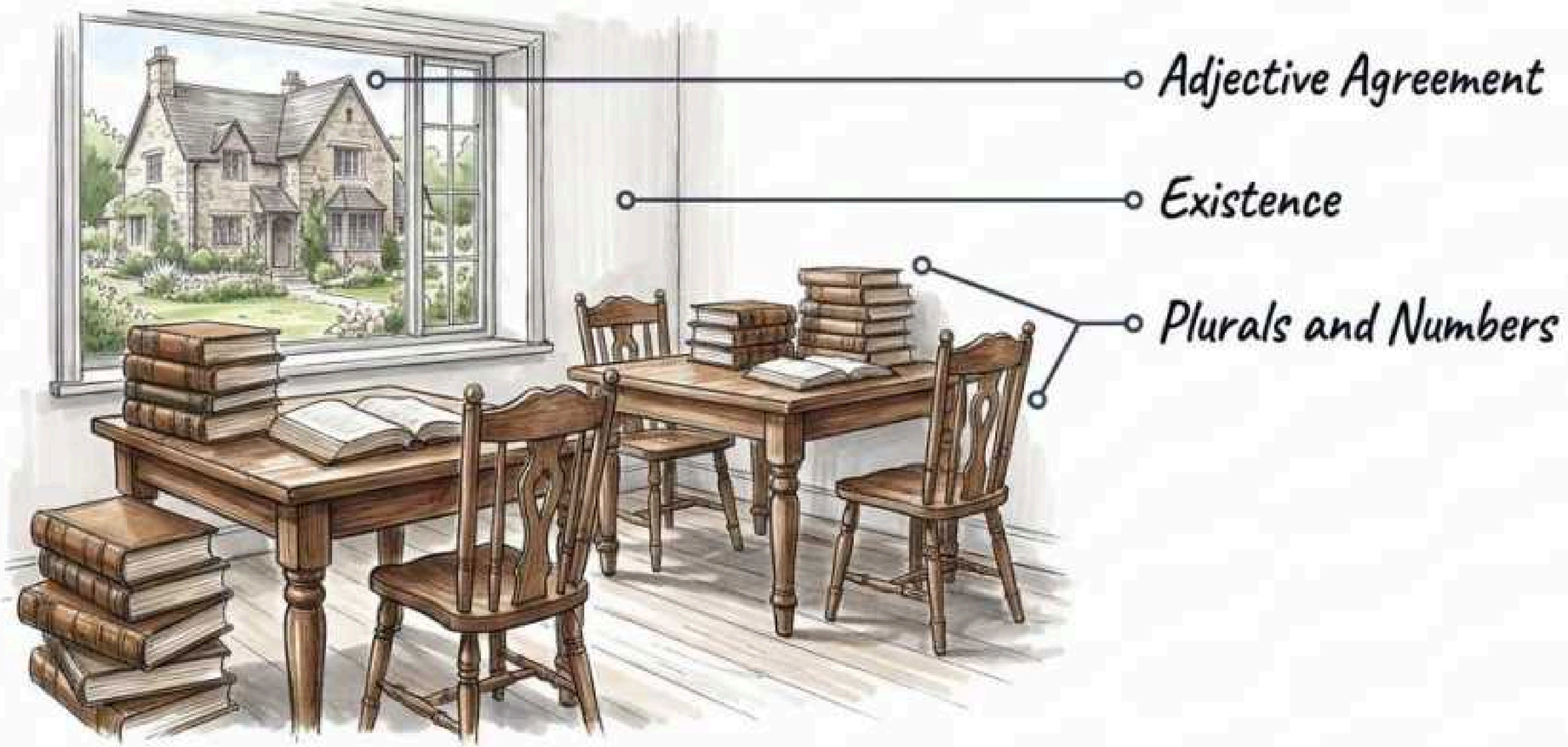


Expressing Age: Use the verb tener (to have). Spanish logic dictates "I have twenty years", not "I am twenty".
Translation: Tengo veinte años.

Bringing It All Together

Mi casa es grande y bonita. Hay dos mesas, cuatro sillas y muchos libros.

(My house is big and pretty, there are two tables, four chairs, and many books.)



One-Minute Exercise: Test Yourself

Lab Exercise

Task: Pick 5 objects in the room around you right now.

The Formula: Name them using Correct Article + Noun + Adjective.
(e.g., la lámpara pequeña, el libro viejo)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Troubleshooting: If unsure of the gender, check the ending rule, then look it up.

Bonus Challenge: Count the objects aloud in Spanish. Few exercises are more useful for the cost of a minute.

Looking Ahead to Lecture 3



Coming up next:

- The two distinct Spanish verbs for ‘to be’.
- Understanding the structural and conceptual differences between Ser and Estar.