

Weak nouns / Masculine -n nouns

Weak nouns, also called **masculine n-nouns**, are a group of masculine nouns in German that have a special declension. In addition to inflecting their article, these nouns themselves add an **-en** or **-n** ending (**-n** if the noun already ends in **-e**) in every case and number except the nominative singular.

	singular	plural	singular	plural
Nominative	der Neffe	die Neffen	der Held	die Helden
Accusative	den Neffen	die Neffen	den Helden	die Helden
Dative	dem Neffen	den Neffen	dem Helden	den Helden
Genitive	des Neffen	der Neffen	des Helden	der Helden

Many of the weak nouns refer to people or animals: **der Student, der Junge, der Herr, der Nachbar, der Franzose, der Elephant, der Hase, der Affe**. Weak nouns that do not refer to people or animals, add an additional **-s** suffix in the genitive singular.

	singular	plural	singular	plural
Nominative	der Name	die Namen	der Fels	die Felsen
Accusative	den Namen	die Namen	den Felsen	die Felsen
Dative	dem Namen	den Namen	dem Felsen	den Felsen
Genitive	des Namens	der Namen	des Felsens	der Felsen

Most masculine **-n** nouns are easily identifiable. They are:

1. Masculine nouns that end in an unstressed **-e**: EX: **der Jude, der Löwe, der Erbe**.
2. Nouns of foreign origin that have their accent on the final syllable. The foreign origin is often evident in the word suffixes (**-ant, -ast, -ent, -et, -ist, -nom, -oph, -ot**, etc.): EX: **der Polizist, der Assistent, der Philosoph, der Despot, der Astronom, der Gymnasiast**.
3. A handful of additional one-syllable masculine nouns that designate male beings, including animals: EX: **der Bär, der Christ, der Mensch, der Prinz, der Narr, der Bauer**.

Within these rules, there are two anomalies, **der Herr**, which takes an **-n** ending in the singular declension forms and an **-en** in the **plural forms**, and **das Herz**, which is a neuter noun that takes on the masculine **-n** noun suffixes, except for in the accusative singular.

	der Herr		das Herz	
	singular	plural	singular	plural
Nominative	der Herr	die Herren	das Herz	die Herzen
Accusative	den Herrn	die Herren	das Herz	die Herzen
Dative	dem Herrn	den Herren	dem Herzen	den Herzen
Genitive	des Herrn	der Herren	des Herzens	der Herzen