

Ways of forming the feminine gender

There are three ways of forming the feminine gender.

1) By using an entirely different word.

Bachelor (masculine) / spinster or maid (feminine)

Boy / girl

Man / woman

Husband / wife

Father / mother

Brother / sister

Son / daughter

Horse / mare

Monk / nun

Buck / doe

King / queen

Cock / hen

Dog / bitch

Drake / duck

Earl / countess

Gander / geese

Gentleman / lady

Nephew / niece

Uncle / aunt

2) By adding a syllable (-ess, -ine, -trix etc) to the masculine gender

Author (masculine) / authoress (feminine)

Baron / baroness

Count / countess

Giant / giantess

Heir / heiress

Host / hostess

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Lion / lioness

Mayor / mayoress

Poet / poetess

Priest / priestess

In the following -ess is added after dropping the vowel of the masculine ending.

Actor (masculine) / actress (feminine)

Enchanter / enchantress

Duke / duchess

Emperor / empress

Prince / princess

Tiger / tigress

Waiter / waitress

Master / mistress

Sorcerer / sorceress

3) By placing a word before or after

Grandfather / grandmother

Manservant / maidservant

Landlord / landlady

Peacock / peahen

Salesman / saleswoman

Washerman / washerwoman

Notes

A mayor can be a man or a woman. In British English, a mayoress is the wife of a male mayor.

Some words ending in -ess are no longer used. Examples are: authoress and poetess. Author and poet are now used for both men and women. The words steward and stewardess are being replaced by other terms like flight attendant. Note that a flight attendant can be a man

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or a woman.