SCOIL SCAIRTE

Field Notes

A GUIDE TO SCOIL SCAIRTE

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Foras na Gaeilge

Ainmfhocail Firinsneacha agus Baininscneacha | Masculine and Feminine Nouns

I nGaeilge / in Irish, *tá gach ainmfhocal firinscneach nó baininscneach* / all nouns are either masculine (*firinscneach*) or feminine (*baininscneach*). Grammatical gender in Irish is not associated with biological gender, e.g.: the word for girl / *cailín* is masculine!

In today's lesson I will share some clues / *leideanna* with you as to how to decipher whether a noun is masculine or feminine. Some of these tips relate to the sounds of words and so, it is really important that we awaken our ears / *caithfimid ár gcluasa a mhúscailt*! This is a really important step in building a natural affinity for the Irish language, where you start to develop an instinct for what sounds right.

Seo linn / here we go!

Why is it important that we know the gender of a given noun?

Well, from a beginner's point of view, the most common reason would be:
When an adjective (a descriptive word e.g. big, small, lovely, red) is used directly with a noun, then the adjective has to agree with the noun's gender/number/case.
Let's see this in action:

Fear	Man (masculine noun)	*An fear maith*	The good man
Bean	Woman (feminine noun)	*An bhean mhaith*	The good woman

Notice how both the noun and adjective for the masculine example <u>isn't lenited</u> while both the noun and the adjective in the case of the feminine example <u>is lenited</u>.

There are of course other more complex grammatical applications regarding a noun's gender but as we're just starting out on this journey, I think it's best to keep to the low pathways rather than diving off fearsome cliffs! Small steps are key!

Masculine Nouns

It's important to note that we can sometimes tell whether a noun is masculine or feminine from any changes (or lack of changes) which take place after the use of the definite article *an* (the).

Masculine nouns which begin with a <u>consonant</u> are always unaffected by the use of the definite article *an* (the), e.g.:

Fear	Man	*An fear*	The man
Buachaill	Boy	*An buachaill*	The boy
Grá	Love	*An grá*	The love
Cailín	Girl	*An cailín*	The girl
Domhan	World	*An domhan*	The world

Masculine nouns which begin with a <u>vowel</u> (*a,e,i,o,u*) have *t-* added to the beginning of their spelling when the definite article *An* is used e.g.:

Ainm	Name	*An t-ainm*	The name
Eolas	Information	*An t-eolas*	The information
Iasc	Fish	*An t-iasc*	The fish
Oileán	Island	*An t-oileán*	The island
Uisce	Water	*An t-uisce*	The water

Mar Shampla / For Example:

Cén t-ainm atá ort?	What's your name?
Bhí orm an t-eolas a tharraingt as	I had to drag the information out of him
Bhí an t-iasc sin an-bhlasta	That fish was very tasty
Shiúil mé an t-oileán ó bhun go barr	I walked the island from end to end/Lit: from bottom to top
Tá an t-uisce úr, glan agus milis	The water is fresh, clean and sweet

Leideanna | Tips!

A noun is masculine if it ends in *–éir*, *–eoir*, *–óir* and is the name of a profession, e.g.:

Siúinéir	Carpenter	*Scríbhneoir*	Writer
Báicéir	Baker	*Bainisteoir*	Manager
Péintéir	Painter	*Feirmeoir*	Farmer
Stiúrthóir	Director	*Riarthóir*	Administrator

A noun is masculine if it is a <u>single syllable</u> word ending in *–eacht* or *–acht*, e.g,: *ceacht* (lesson), *racht* (fit/paroxysm) e.g. *racht feirge* / a fit of anger.

A noun is masculine if it ends with the diminutive suffix *–ín*, e.g.: *cailín* (girl), *cipín* (match).

Leideanna | Tips!

A noun is likely to be masculine if it ends with a <u>long, broad consonant</u> (a consonant or group of consonants which have *a/á*, *o/ó*, *u/ú* before them).

The following long, broad consonant endings are always masculine: *–án*, *–adh*, *–eadh*, *–éal*, *-eo*, *–iú*, *–ú*, *–ún*, *–ús* it is masculine:

-án:	*Troscán*	Furniture	*-adh: Samhradh*	Summer
-eadh: Geimhreadh		Winter	*-éal:* *Scéal*	Story
-eo :	*Treo*	Direction	*-iú:* *Síniú*	Signature
-ú:	*Athrú*	Change	*-ún: Dún*	Fort
-ús:	*Tús*	Start		

Nóta: Not all nouns which end in long, broad consonants are masculine, there are exceptions, so be careful! If you are ever in doubt, then consult the wonderful resource https://www.teanglann.ie/ga/gram/. This will tell you whether a noun is masculine / feminine, along with providing other information that's really useful e.g. the genitive form.

Feminine Nouns

Feminine nouns which begin with <u>most</u> consonants are lenited when they immediately follow the definite article *an*. Lenition means softening or mellowing and the Irish for lenition is *séimhiú*. In Irish, lenition is shown by the addition of *h* after the first consonant in the given word, e.g.:

Máthair	Mother	*An mháthair*	The mother
Maidin	Morning	*An mhaidin*	The morning

Notice that *maidin* is feminine <u>but</u> words that end in *–ín* are masculine e.g. *cailín*. Again, don't underestimate the power of the small but significant *síniú fada*/acute accent!

Grian	Sun	*An ghrian*	The sun
Gealach	Moon	*An ghealach*	The moon

Feminine nouns which begin with a *d* or a *t* are not lenited, e.g.:

Deoir	Tear	*An deoir*	The tear
Tonn	Wave	*An tonn*	The wave

Feminine nouns which begin with *s* and are immediately followed by *l, n, r* (think of the consonants of LuNaR) or a vowel (*a,e,i,o,u*) becomes *ts* after *An* (the), e.g.:

Sluasaid	Shovel	*An tsluasaid*	The shovel
Snaidhm	Knot	*An tsnaidhm*	The knot
Sráid	Street	*An tsráid*	The street
Searc	Love	*An tsearc*	The love

Leideanna | Tips!

A noun is feminine if it ends in *–lann* and denotes a place where something is done e.g.:

Bialann	Restaurant	*Leabharlann*	Library
Amharclann	Theatre	*Pictiúrlann*	Cinema
Cogaslann	Pharmacy	*Saotharlann*	Laboratory

A noun is feminine if it has <u>more than one syllable</u> and ends in *–íocht* or *–aíocht*, e.g.: *filíocht* (poetry) or *iomaíocht* (competition).

Nóta: Watch out for those words ending in *–cht* which have only one syllable as these are masculine nouns, e.g. *smacht* (discipline), *locht* (blame), *racht* (outburst/fit, e.g. *racht feirge*: fit of anger, *racht cainte*: outpouring of speech).

A noun is feminine if it ends in *–eog* or *–óg* e.g.:

Fuinneog	Window	*An fhuinneog*	The window
Bróg	Shoe	*An bhróg*	The shoe

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Leideanna | Tips!

A noun is feminine if it ends in the following underline short consonants (a consonant or group of consonants which have *i* before them). Nouns which have the following short consonant endings are always feminine::

-áid	*Sráid*	Street	
-aíl	*Screadaíl*	Scream	
-áil	*Cáil*	Fame	
-ailt	*Scoilt*	Crack/divide	e.g. *Tá scoilt mhór inár gcaidreamh* (There's a big divide in our relationship)
-áint	*Taispeáint*	Display/Viewing	e.g. *taispeáint phríobhaideach* (A private viewing/screening)
-airt	*Abairt*	Sentence	e.g. *abairt shimplí* (a simple sentence)
-eáil	*Péinteáil*	Painting	
- íl	*Stíl*	Style	e.g. *Stíl phearsanta* (personal style)
-ilt	*Cuimilt*	Stroking/Rubbing	
-irm	*Ceolchoirm*	Concert	
-irt	*Contúirt*	Danger	
-ip	*Cóip*	Copy	e.g. *cóip bhradach* (a pirated copy)
-úil	*Súil*	Eye	
-úint	*Canúint*	Dialect	

Tuilleadh Leideanna | More Tips!

Nóta : It's important to note that some nouns e.g. *buachaill* / boy have consonant endings which sound short but the noun is in fact masculine ! It's also worth noting that the word ending for *buachaill* (–*ill*) doesn't feature in our list of short cononant endings which always denote feminine nouns.

Nóta : Other examples of feminine nouns are *maidin* / morning; *pingin* / penny; *traein* / train. This isn't to say that all nouns which end with –*in* are feminine. But do try saying the words out loud. Do their consonant endings sound short? Remember not to mix up the long consonant sound –*ín* with the short consonant sound –*in* (a little *síniú fada* makes a big difference !). If in doubt about the grammatical gender of any noun, please consult https://www.teanglann.ie/ga.

Nóta : Another example of a feminine noun is *slat* / slender stick or cane. The consonant ending sounds short but then so too does *carbhat* / tie, which is masculine. So do watch out!

Despite all of the exceptions, this guide should provide you with some valuable tools when trying to figure out whether a noun is masculine or feminine.

Tuilleadh Leideanna | More Tips!

A noun is <u>likely</u> to be feminine if it is the name of a country. This too carries some notable exceptions e.g.: *Meiriceá* (America), *Sasana* (England).

A noun is feminine if it is the name of a language e.g.: *Fraincís* (French) or *Iodáilís* (Italian). The exception to this rule is *Béarla* (English).

Nóta: Take a look at the Grammar Database on https://www.teanglann.ie/en/gram. This facility provides all kinds of grammatical information on words in Irish including gender. It's super-easy to use and extremely comprehensive. All you have to do is type the relevant word into the search engine and away you go!

Cleachtadh! | Practice!

An bhfuil na focla seo firinscneach nó baininscneach?

1. *Úrscéal*   Novel
2. *Draíocht*   Magic
3. *Árasán*   Apartment
4. *Míorúilt*   Miracle
5. *Codladh*   Sleep/slumber
6. *Stoirm*   Storm
7. *Fraincís*   French
8. *Folús*   Void/Emptiness
9. *Sasana*   England
10. *Anáil*   Breath
11. *Botún*   Mistake
12. *Gleo*   Noise/racket
13. *Béal*   Mouth
14. *Ócáid*   Occasion/event

Cleachtadh! | Practice!

Freagraí

1.	*Úrscéal*	Novel	*Firinscneach*
2.	*Draíocht*	Magic	*Baininscneach*
3.	*Árasán*	Apartment	*Firinscneach*
4.	*Míorúilt*	Miracle	*Baininscneach*
5.	*Codladh*	Sleep/slumber	*Firinscneach*
6.	*Stoirm*	Storm	*Baininscneach*
7.	*Fraincís*	French	*Baininscneach*
8.	*Folús*	Void/Emptiness	*Firinscneach*
9.	*Sasana*	England	*Firinscneach*
10.	*Anáil*	Breath	*Baininscneach*
11.	*Botún*	Mistake	*Firinscneach*
12.	*Gleo*	Noise/racket	*Firinscneach*
13.	*Béal*	Mouth	*Firinscneach*
14.	*Ócáid*	Occasion/event	*Baininscneach*

Stór Focal

Last week we had our first look at the verb *Taitníonn le* (pleasing with):

An dtaitníonn spórt leat?	Do you like sport? / Is sport pleasing with you?
Taitníonn spórt go mór liom	I like sport a lot / Sport is pleasing with me a lot
Ní thaitníonn spórt liom..	I don't like sport / Sport is not pleasing with me..
..ach is breá liom a bheith ag cócaireacht	..but I love cooking

Le / With combined with Pronouns

Liom	With me	*Linn*	With us
Leat	With you	*Libh*	With you
Leis	With him	*Leo*	With them
Léi	With her		

Taitníonn an dath dearg linn   We like the colour red / The colour red is pleasing with us
Taitníonn an dath bándearg liom I like pink / The colour pink is pleasing with me

Cé leis? Whose is? / Lit: Whose with?

Cé leis an mála leathair seo?	Who owns this leather bag?
Is liomsa é	I own it / It's with me
Ní liomsa é	I don't own it / It's not with me

Dathanna | Colours

Bán	White
Bándearg	Pink
Bánghorm	Light blue
Buí	Yellow
Corcra	Purple
Dearg	Red
Donn	Brown
Dubh	Black
Dorcha	Dark (can be used in reference to hair, *gruaig dhorcha* / dark hair)
Dubh dorcha	Pitch black
Fíondaite	Wine coloured
Fionn	Fair (used in reference to hair, *gruaig fhionn* / fair hair)
Glas	Green (used in reference to the natural world e.g. *féar glas* / green grass)
Glébhuí	Canary Yellow
Gorm	Blue
Gormghlas	Bluegreen
Ildaite	Multi-coloured
Liath	Grey
Muirghlas	Sea-green
Oráiste	Orange
Rua	Red (used in reference to hair, *gruaig rua* / red hair as well as in other contexts e.g. *Níl pingin rua agam* / I don't have a brass farthing / I am completely broke, *madra rua* / fox)
Spéirghorm	Sky-blue
Uaine	Green (used in reference to manufactured things e.g. *Tá gúna uaine orm* / I am wearing a green dress)

Dathanna | Colours

Taitníonn dathanna geala liom   I like bright colours

Taitníonn dathanna dorcha léi   She likes dark colours

Ní thaitníonn dathanna éadroma leo   They don't like pale colours

Taitníonn dathanna spleodracha libh   You (plural) like exuberant colours

Is fuath leis dathanna croíúla   He hates cheerful colours

Baill Éadaigh | Items of Clothing

Bástchóta	Waistcoat	*Crios*	Belt
Blús	Blouse	*Fothbhríste*	Underpants
Bróga	Shoes	*Fo-éadaí*	Underwear
Bríste	Trousers	*Geansaí*	Jumper
Bríste Géine	Jeans	*Gúna*	Dress
Brístín	Knickers	*Hata*	Hat
Buataisí	Boots	*Léine*	Shirt
Caipín	Cap	*Riteoga*	Tights
Carbhat	Tie	*Scairf*	Scarf
Cóta	Coat	*Sciorta*	Skirt
Cóta báistí	Raincoat	*Seaicéad*	Jacket
Culaith (éadaigh)	Suit (of clothes)	*Stocaí*	Socks
Culaith shnámha	Swimsuit/togs	*T-léine*	T-shirt
Culaith oíche	Night clothes/pyjamas		

Oiriúintí | Accessories

Bráisléad	Bracelet
Banda gruaige	Hair band
Fáinne	Ring
Fáinní cluaise	Earrings
Fáinne laidhre	Toe ring / Digit ring
Fáinne sróine	Nose ring
Fáiscín gruaige	Hair slide
Muince	Necklace
Seodra	Jewellery
Spéaclaí	Glasses
Tatú	Tattoo
Uaireadóir	Watch

Nóta: *Laidhricín* is the Irish for little toe.

Seomraí Beaga

Next week in your *Seomraí Beaga* you might like to take it in turns to describe what you are wearing or perhaps take time to describe a favourite outfit.

Why not try guessing each other's favourite colour:

Is maith leatsa an dath _____.	You like the colour_____.
Is maith liom an dath sin ach is fearr liom dath eile.	I like that colour but I prefer another colour.
Tomhais cén dath is fearr liom.	Guess which colour I prefer/guess my favourite colour.
Sílim go b'é an dath is fearr leat ná an dath ___.	I think your favourite colour is the colour ___.
Tá an ceart agat.	You're right.
Tá tú mícheart.	You're wrong.
Níl tú gar dó fiú. Tomhais arís.	You're not even close. Guess again.

If you can't guess one another's favourite colour, then, just ask what it is:

Abair liom mar sin, cén dath is fearr leat?	Then tell me, what's your favourite colour?
Sé'n dath is fearr liom ná an dath _____.	My favourite is the colour _____.

Haiku

**Báisteach thús an tsamhraidh –
guth na cuaiche
sular rugadh mé**

bawshtuck hoos un towree
guh na cooihke
suller rugoo may

**Early summer rain –
the voice of the cuckoo
before I was born**

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"If white people are a relatively modern invention, who were white people before they were white? This is a question that will have different answers depending on where you're from. But nonetheless whiteness is an erasure, a generic term that collapses crucial distinctions in order to consolidate capital. I recently came across the word Duthchas, an ancient Gaelic ecological principle of interconnectedness between people, the land and nonhuman beings. Duthchas speaks to the type of co-existence, interrelationality and entanglement that we are now, perhaps too late, recognising the utter necessity of, if we are going to survive. Entanglements that would be bulldozed over by 'modernity'; developments like the Cartesian logic of French philosopher Rene Descartes, with its culture/nature man/nature dualisms and Enlightenment Humanism that conceived of the world as comprised of discretely bounded entities that could be categorised, known and dominated by 'Man' (Man himself also conceived of as a discretely bounded entity). People with physical features that came to be racialised as 'white' had existed for many thousands of years before they became reimagined as 'white people'. That this re-imagining was developed and advanced not long after these philosophical developments is no coincidence, the two are inherently interconnected" (Dabiri, 2021: 34).

"Many of the cherished categories of the intersectional mantra—originally starting with race, class, gender, now including sexuality, nation, religion, age, and disability—are the products of modernist colonial agendas and regimes of epistemic violence, operative through a Western/Euro-American formation through which the notion of discrete identity has emerged" (Puar, 2012: 55).

"A being largely dominated by memory and the past is one for whom the present, and its possibilities of action are curtailed. To be mired in the past is to be unable to think and act the future; conversely, to be unanchored in the past, to have no connections to, or resonances with, the past, is also to have no way to see or make a future, it is to have no place from which a future can be made that is different to the present. Well-being requires a judicious mix of the historical and the ahistorical, the timely and the untimely, the past and the future" (Grosz, 2004:116).

"Nietzsche was not concerned with historical accuracy or so-called 'facts', but rather with the potentialities of the past for the transformation of the future. Such a conception of history seeks to problematize the prevailing views on which the study of the past (from a western perspective, I hasten to add) has previously been based, such as the belief that the past is an objective reality that can be more or less accessed and reconstructed in the present through material artefacts and texts retained or gleaned from the past" (Grosz 2004: 114).

Duine Gorm

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