

## Old English Grammatical Gender

A:

Old English and other Indo-European languages had a three-fold distinction of a grammatical category called gender. This is not the same as what is commonly called gender, where a rooster might be masculine, a mare feminine, etc. In Old English, the way words were assigned to a gender had little (or nothing) to do with biological sex or social constructions. Associations between words and their “gender” are largely random. Below you will find examples of strong nouns of all three grammatical genders:

Masculine Noun				
Singular		Case	Plural	
se	stān	nom	þā	stānas
þone	stān	acc	þā	stānas
þæs	stānes	gen	þāra	stāna
þæm	stāne	dat	þæm	stānum
þy	stāne	instr		

Feminine Noun				
Singular		Case	Plural	
sēo	cwēn	nom	þā	cwēna
þā	cwēne	acc	þā	cwēna
þære	cwēne	gen	þāra	cwēna
þære	cwēne	dat	þæm	cwēnum

Neuter Noun				
Singular		Case	Plural	
þæt	scip	nom	þā	scipu
þæt	scip	acc	þā	scipu
þæs	scipes	gen	þāra	scipa
þæm	scipe	dat	þæm	scipum

B:

Using knowledge gained from the paradigms on the previous page, fill in the blank spaces below to complete the following tables:

Masculine Noun				
Singular		Case	Plural	
___	fugol	nom	___	fuglas
þone	eorl	acc	þā	eorl___
þæs	fugl___	gen	þāra	fugl_
þæm	eorl_	dat	___	eorlum
___	fugle	instr	___	___

Feminine Noun				
Singular		Case	Plural	
___	heord	nom	þā	giefa
þā	gief_	acc	___	heord_
___	heord_	gen	þāra	gief_
þære	cwēne	dat	___	heord___

Neuter Noun				
Singular		Case	Plural	
___	trēow	nom	___	trēow
þæt	hors	acc	þā	hors
___	trēow___	gen	þāra	hors_
þæm	hors_	dat	___	trēow___