

Ceacht

7

Cad é seo?

What is this?



This lesson introduces nouns, and how they change according to gender, number and case.

This lesson contains the following topics:

1. Using the pronouns sé and sí
2. Recognising masculine nouns
3. Masculine nouns with the article
4. Recognising feminine nouns
5. Feminine nouns with the article
6. Forming the plural
7. The common case
8. The vocative case
9. The genitive case
10. The first declension
11. The second declension
12. The third declension
13. The fourth declension
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15. Irregular nouns
16. The article in the common case (*the*)
17. The article in the genitive case (*of the*)
18. Masculine nouns with the article in the genitive case
19. Feminine nouns with the article in the genitive case
20. Plural nouns with the article in the genitive case
21. Table of plurals
22. Cardinal numbers with the article in the genitive case
23. The dative case

Inflexion

Like most Indo-European languages, including English, Irish is an inflected language. This means that words change when used in different ways. Over many centuries, for many reasons, English has lost many of its inflexions, but a few instances still remain.

Irish nouns change according to:

- **Inscne** *gender* – whether they are masculine or feminine (English nouns have lost their gender differences)
- **Uimhir** *number* – whether there is one or more of them (as in English: *foot/feet, boat/boats, ox/oxen, sheep/sheep*)
- **Tuiseal** *case* – their function in the sentence (still seen in some English pronouns: *I/me, we/us, he/him, she/her*)

Gender

Irish nouns fall into one of two genders: *masculine* and *feminine*. You can recognise them by how the article, **an**, affects them. The article affects masculine and feminine nouns differently. It is often useful learning new nouns with the article.

Although there are some exceptions, nouns describing male people or animals are generally masculine: **fear**, *man*; **tarbh**, *bull*. Nouns describing females are generally feminine: **bean**, *woman*; **cearc**, *hen*. Other nouns can belong to either of the two genders.

There are no set rules as to which nouns are masculine and which are nouns are feminine, however there are some word-endings that can give you a clue for many nouns.

1. Using the pronouns sé and sí

Generally, use the pronouns **sé** and **sí** according to the gender of the noun, that is **sé** (*it*) for **an bord** (*the table*) and **sí** (*it*) for **an uirlis** (*the instrument*). However, where the noun's gender does not correspond to the sex of what it describes, use the appropriate pronoun: **an cailín** (masculine), *the girl* – use **sí**; **an stáil** (feminine), *the stallion* – use **sé**.

As in English, **sí** (*she*) is commonly used for modes of transport, such as cars, boats, ships, planes, and so on, despite the actual gender of the noun. This is known as the '*feminine of reference*'.

Ainmfhocail fhirinscneacha - *Masculine nouns*

You can recognise masculine nouns from certain endings and how the article affects them.

2. Recognising masculine nouns

Nouns with the following endings are usually masculine:

Ending	Example
-as	<i>the door</i> an doras
-ás	<i>the consolation</i> an sólás
-an	<i>the version</i> an leagan
-án	<i>the cup</i> an cupán
-ún	<i>the nation</i> an náisiún
-éal	<i>the bottle</i> an buidéal
-úr	<i>the hammer</i> an casúr
-éar	<i>the supper</i> an suipéar
-ar	<i>the road</i> an bóthar
-éad	<i>the packet</i> an paicéad
-ad	<i>the bridge</i> an droichead
-adh	<i>the sleep</i> an codladh
-amh	<i>the idea</i> an smaoineamh
-ín	<i>the girl</i> an cailín
-iste	<i>the child</i> an páiste

The suffix **-ach** is used to denote a person from a particular place or with a particular surname. It is a *masculine* noun ending regardless of the sex of the person concerned:

- the Englishman/woman* **an Sasanach**
the French man/woman, the rat **an Francach**
(the person whose surname is) 'Kelly' **an Ceallach**

The following endings are used for *agent* or *occupational* nouns, denoting people habitually engaged in an activity, similar to the English suffixes *-er* and *-or*. They are masculine nouns.

Ending	Example
-óir/-eoir	<i>the teacher</i> an múinteoir
-éir	<i>the butcher</i> an búistéir
-ire	<i>the piper</i> an píobaire
-í	<i>the storyteller</i> an scéalaí

3. Masculine nouns with the article

In the common case, the article, **an**, meaning *the*, prefixes **t-** to masculine nouns beginning with a vowel.

The bird flew off. **Ghread an t-éan leis.**
/ɣræ:d ə t'e:N l'es/

I caught the fish yesterday. **Mharaigh mé an t-iasc inné.**
/βa:ri: m'e:N t'iask in'e:/

She ate the apple **D'ith sí an t-úll**
/d'ih s'i:N tu:L/

Sweep the floor! **Scuab an t-urlár!**
/skuəb ə turLɑ:r/

Ainmfhocail bhaininsneacha - *Feminine nouns*

You can recognise feminine nouns from a different group of endings. The article **an**, meaning *the*, affects them differently too.

4. Recognising feminine nouns

In the common form, the article, **an**, causes séimhiú to feminine nouns where possible, except nouns beginning with **t**, **d** or **s***.

* See section 5.

Nouns with the following endings are usually feminine:

Ending	Example
-óg/-eog	<i>the shoe</i> an bhróg
-acht ¹	<i>the Irish-speaking area</i> an Ghaeltacht
-íocht	<i>the replacement</i> an ionadaíocht
-seach	<i>the harp</i> an chláirseach
-ach ²	<i>the rain</i> an bháisteach
-áil(t)	<i>the treatment</i> an chóireáil
-aíl	<i>the whistling</i> an fheadaíl
-irt	<i>the threat</i> an bhagairt
-ilt	<i>the grinding</i> an mheilt
-int	<i>the talking</i> an chaint
-á/úint	<i>the pursuit</i> an leanúint
-éis	<i>the information</i> an fháisnéis
-is(t)	<i>the instrument</i> an uirlis
-ís/-aois	<i>the age</i> an aois
-áid	<i>the use</i> an úsáid
-óid	<i>the ball</i> an liathróid
-lann	<i>the library</i> an leabharlann

¹ Nouns with more than one syllable.

² Except when denoting a nationality.

Most geographical names and languages are feminine:

Countries:

an Astráil *Australia*, **an Fhrainc** *France*, **an Indinéis** *Indonesia*

{exceptions include: **Meiriceá** *America*, **Ceanada** *Canada*, **Sasana** *England*}

Rivers:

an Bhóinn *The Boyne*, **an tSionainn** *The Shannon*

Languages:

an Fhraincis *French*, **an Iodáilis** *Italian*, **an Ghaeilge** *Irish*

{exception: **an Béarla** *English*}

5. Feminine nouns with the article

Words beginning with **t** or **d** tend to resist séimhiú after **an**.

This drink is too strong. **Tá an deoch seo ró-mheisciúil.**

/t̪aːN d'ox s'ɔ roː β'es'k'u:l' /

Extinguish the fire! **Múch an tine!**

/muːx ə t'in'ə/

In the common case, the article, **an**, prefixes **t** to feminine nouns beginning with **s** + a liquid consonant (**sl-**, **sn-**, **sr-**) or **s** + a vowel (replacing the **s** sound). This also happens with **sa**, a contraction of **insan** (**in** + **an**). It is a form of seimhiú caused by the dental consonant **-n**:

He went this way. **Chuaigh sé an tslí seo!**

He took (lit. gave) the cane to them. **Thug sé an tslat dóibh.**

Cut the thread! **Gearr an tsnáth!**

He left his car out in the street. **D'fhág sé a charr amuigh sa tsráid.**

Don't bite my nose off! **Ná bain an tsrón díom!**

(Don't take the nose off me!)

See you next week! **Feicfidh mé an tseachtain**

(lit. I'll see the week **seo chugainn thú.**

here toward-us you.)

It's going to rain. **Tá braon an tsúil.***

(There's a drop in the eye.)

Cleachtadh

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate form of the noun.

1. Tá an _____ ró-gheal. (solas) *The light is too bright.*
2. Níl an _____ an-ghnóthach. (sráid) *The street is not very busy.*
3. An bhfuil an _____ oscailte? (fuinneog) *Is the window open?*
4. Chonaiceamar an _____ sa choill. (ainmhí)
We saw the animal in the wood.

5. Tá an _____ seo go han-deas. (áit) *This place is very nice.*
6. Bhí an _____ siúd anseo inné. (bean) *That woman was here yesterday.*
7. Tá an _____ ag gaire. (cailín) *The girl is laughing.*
8. Scuabadh an _____ inné. (urlár) *The floor was swept yesterday.*
9. An bhfuil an _____ agat? (airgead) *Have you got the money?*
10. Is é Máirtín an _____. (dochtúir) *Máirtín is the doctor.*
11. Freagair an _____ ! (ceist) *Answer the question!*
12. Tá an _____ aige é a fháil. (cumhacht) *He has the power to get it.*
13. Tá an _____ ag canadh. (éan) *The bird is singing.*
14. Athchóiríodh an _____. (ospidéal) *The hospital was renovated.*
15. Cad é an _____ sin? (boladh) *What's that smell?*

Number

In Irish, the plural is not used as much as in English. There are several ways the plural can be formed and you'll learn them through usage.

Plural forms may vary in different parts of the country. For example, for 'books' you might hear **leabhair** in Kerry, **leabhartha** in Galway and **leabhairí** in Donegal - so don't be afraid of making a guess! People know what you mean.

The common plural form of the article is **na**, which prefixes **h** to words beginning with a vowel.

na héin *the birds*, **na háiteanna** *the places*

6. Forming the plural

The following table shows the various ways the plural is formed. The first two examples are *weak plurals*, which means the *genitive plural* is the same as the *common singular*. The others are *strong plurals*, where the *genitive plural* is the same as the *common plural*.

Masculine nouns ending in a broad consonant often form the plural by making the final consonant **slender** (sometimes a vowel changes, too):

cat-cait *cats*, **bord-boird** *tables*, **leabhar-leabhair** *books*, **iasc-éisc** *fish*
botún-botúin *mistakes*, **sliogán-sliogáin** *shells*, **mac-mic** *sons*
fear-fir *men*, **buidéal-buidéil** *bottles*, **bacach-bacair** *beggars*

Feminine nouns ending in a broad consonant often form the plural by adding the neutral vowel **-a**:

bialann-bialanna *restaurants*, **fuinneog-fuinneoga** *windows*,
muc-muca *pigs*, **cos-cosa** *feet*, **scian-sceana** *knives*

Many feminine nouns ending in **-ach**, **-acht**, **-úint**, masculine nouns ending in **-adh**, and most occupational nouns form the plural by adding **-(a)í**:

bealach-bealaí *ways*, **poblacht-poblactaí** *republics*, **cogadh-cogaí** *wars*,
canúint-canúintí *dialects*, **aire-airí** *ministers*, **búistéir-búistéirí** *butchers*

Nouns ending in **-a**, **-e**, **-ín** usually form their plural ending in **-(a)í**:

mapa-mapai *maps*, **file-filí** *poets*, **cailín-cailíní** *girls*

Nouns ending in **-é**, **-á**, **-ó** usually form their plural in **-(a)nna**:

gé-géanna *geese*, **trá-tráanna** *beaches*, **cnó-cnóanna** *nuts*

Often nouns form the plural by adding **-(e)anna**, **-(e)acha**:

scoil-scoileanna *schools*, **deoch-deochanna** *drinks*
clár-cláireacha *programmes*, **cathaoir-cathaoireacha** *chairs*

Some nouns ending in a broad liquid consonant (**l**, **r** or **n**) form the plural by adding **-ta**, **-tha**:

tonn-tonnta *waves*, **scéal-scéalta** *stories*, **glór-glórtha** *voices*

Nouns ending in **-le**, **-ne** often form their plural ending in **-te**:

baile-bailte *towns*, **léine-léinte** *shirts*, **míle-mílte** *thousands*

Nouns ending in **-í**, **-aoi**, **-ú** usually form their plural ending in **-(a)ithe**:

dlí-dlith *laws*, **laoi-laoithe** *ballads*, **cruinniú-cruinnithe** *meetings*

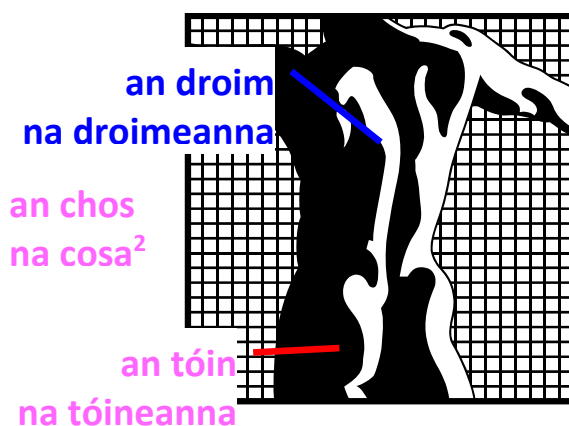
Cleachtadh

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate plural form of the noun.

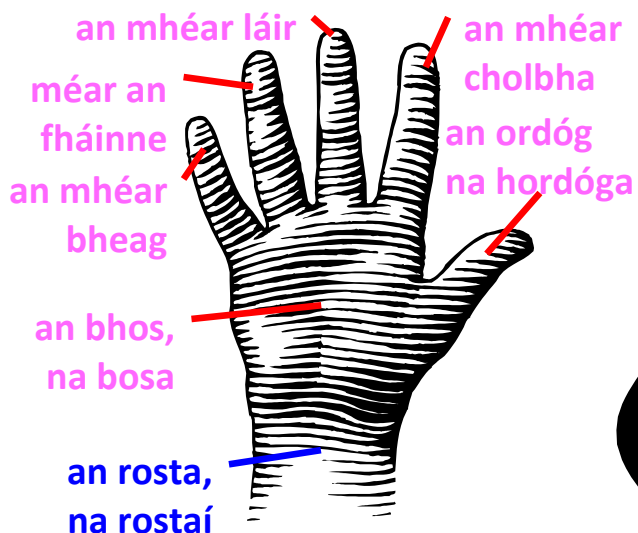
1. Tá na _____ sin daor. (arasán) *Those flats are expensive.*
2. An raibh na _____ ar an mbord? (hata) *Were the hats on the table?*
3. Nach bhfuil na _____ sin nua? (bróg) *Aren't those shoes new?*
4. Níl na _____ sásta. (tiománaí) *The drivers aren't happy.*
5. D'fhan na _____ sa bhaile. (iascaire) *The fishermen stayed at home.*
6. Níl na _____ seo saibhir. (bean) *These women aren't rich.*
7. Tá na _____ seo an-bhlasta. (cnó) *These nuts are delicious.*
8. Tá na _____ dúnta ceana féin. (siopa) *The shops are closed already.*
9. An bhfuil na _____ glan? (bord) *Are the tables clean?*
10. Tógadh na _____ fadó. (balla) *The walls were built long ago.*
11. Cuireadh na _____ seo ar an rialtas. (ceist)
These questions were put to the government.
12. Nigh sé na _____. (gloine) *He washed the glasses.*
13. Tá na _____ ag cannadh. (éan) *The birds are singing.*
14. Bhí na _____ glas. (duilleog) *The leaves were green.*
15. Níl na _____ ag caint air. (fear) *The men weren't talking about it.*

Baill an choirp - Parts of the body

Many parts of the body are **feminine** nouns:



Baill na láimhe

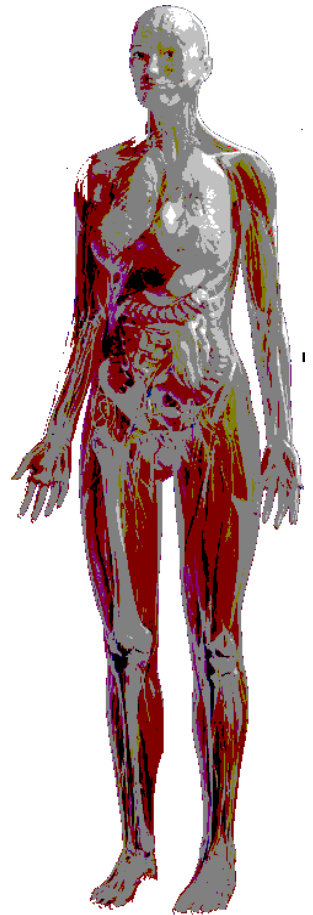


Baill na coise

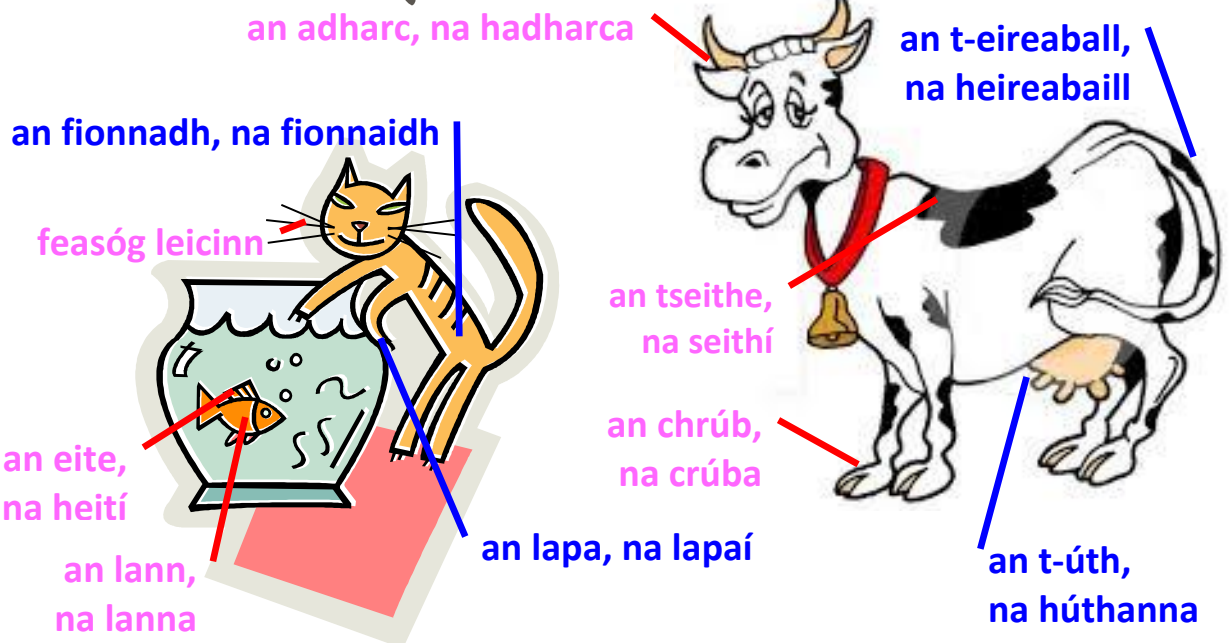
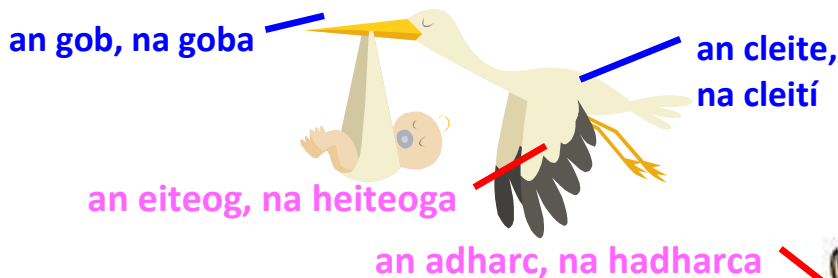


Many internal organs of the body are **masculine** nouns:

bone	an cnámh, na cnámha
brain	an inchinn, na hinchinne
heart	an croí, na croithe
kidney	an duán, na duáin
lip	an liopa, na liopaí
liver	an t-ae, na haenna
lung	an scamhóg, na scamhóga
pancreas	an briseán milis, na briseáin mhilise
rib	an easna, na heasnaí
skin	an craiceann, na craicne
spleen	an liathán, na liatháin
stomach	an goile, na goilí
throat	an scornach, na scornacha
tongue	an teanga, na teangacha
tooth	an fhiacail, na fiacila



Animal, animals: **an t-ainmhí, na hainmhithe**



1. **Gruaig** generally refers to a single hair on the head. Use the plural: **gruaige**, to refer to hair in general. **Fionnadh** refers to body hair or (animal) fur.
2. **Lámh** and **cos** refer to *hand/arm* and *foot/leg* respectively. Use the word for 'limb': **géag (láimhe/coise)** if you want to specifically refer to the whole arm or leg. **Sciathán**, another word for *wing*, can also be used for *arm*.

Cá bhfuil an gortú ort? *Where are you hurt?*



1. Tá mé tar éis leonadh* mo lámh. (**I have sprained/I'm after spraining*)
2. Tá tinneas* cinn orm. (**ache/pain*)
3. Gortaíodh* an lorga orm. (**was hurt/injured*)
4. Tá déideadh orm./Tá tinneas fiacaile orm.
5. Tá daigh* bhoilg orm. (**ache/pain*)
6. Ghortaigh mé* mo chos. (**I hurt/injured*)
7. Tá tinneas cluaise orm.
8. Tá pian i mo dhroim.
9. Tá mo scornach tinn.
10. Tá slaghdán* orm. (**a cold*)
11. Gortaíodh mo mhuineál.
12. Briseadh* mo sciathán. (**was broken*)

Case

7. The common case

The common case is used when the nouns is the subject or the direct object of the verb, corresponding to the *nominative*, *accusative* (and *ergative*) cases in other languages. It is the standard form of the noun.

8. The vocative case

The vocative case is used when addressing a person or a thing. The vocative particle: **a** (which causes séimhiú) precedes the noun:

a Mháiréad (*oh*) *Margaret* **a dhuine uaisle** *sir* **a bhean uasal** *madam*

If a masculine noun ends in a broad consonant:

- In the singular, the broad consonant becomes slender:
a Shéamais (*oh*) *James*, **a mhic** *son*, **a chréatúir bhocht!** *poor creature!*
- In the plural, add **a**:
A fheara agus a mhrá na hÉireann! *Men and women of Ireland!*

9. The genitive case

Whenever two nouns come together, the second (qualifying) noun takes the genitive case, for example:

- Showing *origin* or *possession*:
Séamas *Séamas* **máthair Shéamais** *Séamas' mother*
bean *woman* **teach na mná** *the woman's house*
- Showing *quality* or *quantity*:
solas *light* **tuilleadh solais** *more light*
adhmaid *wood* **bosca adhmaid** *a wooden box*
plúr *flour* **cupán plúir** *a cup of flour*
am *time* **go leor ama** *plenty of time*
- Immediately following a *compound preposition*:
an chathair *the city* **i lár na caithreach** *in the centre of the city*
an áit *the place* **ar fud na háite** *all over the place*
- The direct object of a *verbal noun*:
an tír *the country* **ag taisteal na tíre** *touring the country*
airgead *money* **ag saothrú airgid** *earning money*

Declensions

Nouns are grouped into *declensions* according to how they change to form the *genitive* case. You'll notice that nouns in the same declension group often form their plurals in similar ways. (See section 21.)

10. The first declension

Nouns in the *first declension* are almost all *masculine* ending in a *broad* consonant.

They form the *genitive singular* and the *common plural* in the same way: by changing the final *broad* consonant to *slender* (a *weak plural*).

The *genitive plural* is usually the same as the *common singular*.

11. The second declension

Nouns in the *second declension* are almost all *feminine*. Most that end in a *broad* consonant form the common plural by adding **-a**.

They form the *genitive singular* by changing the final *broad* consonant to *slender* and adding **-e**.

Like first declension nouns, many *second declension* nouns often have a *genitive plural* form that is the same as the *common singular* form (*weak*). However, many *second declension* nouns end in a *slender* consonant, and many have a *strong plural*.

12. The third declension

Nouns in the *third declension* are almost all *masculine* ending in a *slender* consonant. This includes the group of *occupational* nouns ending in **-eoir/-óir**.

They form the *genitive singular* by changing the final *slender* consonant to *broad* and adding **-a**.

Most *third declension* nouns form a *strong plural* in **-í** or **-anna**.

13. The fourth declension

Nouns in the *fourth declension* are those that ending in a vowel and form their plural in **-í**. This includes the group of *occupational* nouns ending in **-í** that form their plural in **-te** or **-(a)ithe**.

Fourth declension nouns do not change in the *genitive* case.

14. The fifth declension

Most nouns in the *fifth declension* are *feminine*, and end in a *slender* consonant or a vowel.

They form the *genitive singular* by changing the final *slender* consonant to *broad*, sometimes adding a *broad* consonant (**-ch**, **-n** or **-d**).

Many *fifth declension* nouns form the *common* and *genitive plural* in **-acha**.

See the following table for a summary:

common case → genitive case

-C = final broad consonant; -c = final slender consonant

-V = final broad (consonant + neutral) vowel

-v = final slender (consonant + neutral) vowel

Declension	Singular	Plural
1 ^d	-C → -c bád → báid , scéal → scéil <i>boat</i> → <i>of a boat</i> , <i>story</i> → <i>of a story</i>	-c → -C, -ta/tha báid → bád , scéal ta <i>boats</i> → <i>of boats</i> , <i>(of) stories</i>
2 ^a	-C(c) → -v bróg → bróige , áit → áite <i>shoe</i> → <i>of a shoe</i> , <i>place</i> → <i>of a place</i>	-V → -C(c), -eanna bróga → bróg , áite anna <i>shoes</i> → <i>of shoes</i> , <i>(of) places</i>
3 ^ú	-c(C) → -V dochtúir → dochtúra , droim → droma <i>doctor</i> → <i>of a doctor</i> , <i>back</i> → <i>of a back</i>	-í, -anna dochtúirí , dromanna <i>(of) doctors</i> , <i>(of) backs</i>
4 ^ú	vowel (no change) bosca , rúnaí <i>(of a) box</i> , <i>(of a) secretary</i>	-í, -te, -(a)ithe boscaí , rúnaithe <i>(of) boxes</i> , <i>(of) secretaries</i>
5 ^ú	-c (V) → -C athair → athar , lacha → lachan <i>father</i> → <i>of a father</i> , <i>duck</i> → <i>of a duck</i>	-eacha, -c → -C aithreacha , lachain → lachan <i>(of) fathers</i> , <i>ducks</i> → <i>of ducks</i>

15. Irregular nouns

There is a small group of irregular nouns that do not comfortably fit into any of the five declensions:

bean, mná → **mná, ban** *woman, women* → *of a woman, (of) women*

lá, laethanta → **lae, laethanta** *day, days* → *of a day, (of) days*

leaba, leapacha → **leapan, leapacha** *bed, beds* → *of a bed, (of) beds*

16. The article in the common case (*the*)

The *masculine singular* is **an^t** (*the*), which:

- Adds **t-** to masculine nouns beginning with a vowel

The *feminine singular* is **an^s** (*the*), which:

- Causes séimhiú to feminine nouns (except dental sounds: **t** or **d**)
- Adds **t** to feminine nouns beginning with **sn**, **sl**, **sr**, **s**+vowel

an bád *the boat*

an bhróg *the shoe*

an doras *the door*

an tine *the fire*

an t-éan *the bird*

an áit *the place*

an seomra *the room*

an tsráid *the street*

The *plural* is **na^h** (*the*), which:

- Adds **h** to all nouns beginning with a vowel

na báid *the boats*

na bróga *the shoes*

na doirse *the doors*

na tinté *the fires*

na héin *the birds*

na háiteanna *the places*

na seomraí *the rooms*

na sráideanna *the streets*

17. The article in the genitive case (*of the*)

The *masculine singular* is **an^s** (*of the*), which:

- Causes séimhiú to masculine nouns (except dental sounds: **t** or **d**)
- Adds **t** to masculine nouns beginning with **sn**, **sl**, **sr**, **s** + a vowel

The *feminine singular* is **na^h** (*of the*), which:

- Adds **h** to feminine nouns beginning with a vowel

an bháid *of the boat, the boat's*

na bróige *of the shoe, the shoe's*

an dorais *of the door, the door's*

na tine *of the fire, the fire's*

an éin *of the bird, the bird's*

na háite *of the place, the place's*

an tseomra *of the room, the room's*

na sráide *of the street, the street's*

The *plural* is **naⁿ** (*of the*), which:

- Causes urú to all nouns beginning with a consonant
- Adds **n-** to all nouns beginning with a vowel

na mbád *of the boats, the boats'*

na mbróg *of the shoes, the shoes'*

na ndoras *of the doors, the doors'*

na dtinte *of the fires, the fires'*

na n-éan *of the birds, the birds'*

na n-áiteanna *of the places, the places'*

na seomraí *of the rooms, the rooms'*

na sráideanna *of the streets, the streets'*

The genitive case and the article

Note: Only the second noun takes the article.

18. Masculine nouns with the article in the genitive case

In the *genitive* case, the *masculine singular article* is **an^s** (*of the*), which:

- Causes séimhiú to masculine nouns (except dental sounds: **t** or **d**)
- Adds **t** to masculine nouns beginning with **sn, sl, sr, s** + a vowel

<i>the legs of the table</i>	cosa an bhoird
<i>the door knob/handle</i>	murlán an dorais
<i>the bird's beak</i>	gob an éin
<i>the size of the room</i>	méid an tseomra

19. Feminine nouns with the article in the genitive case

In the *genitive* case, the *feminine singular article* is **na^h** (*of the*), which:

- Adds **h** to feminine nouns beginning with a vowel

<i>the sole of the shoe</i>	bun na bróige
<i>the fire's warmth</i>	teas na tine
<i>the local people</i>	muintir na háite
<i>in the middle of the street</i>	i lár na sráide

20. Plural nouns with the article in the genitive case

In the *genitive* case, the *plural article* is **na^u** (*of the*), which:

- Causes urú to all nouns beginning with a consonant
- Adds **n-** to all nouns beginning with a vowel

<i>the legs of the tables</i>	cosa na mbord
<i>the door knob/handles</i>	murláin na ndoras
<i>the birds' singing</i>	cannadh na n-éan
<i>the size of the room</i>	méid na seomraí
<i>the soles the shoes</i>	boinn na mbróg
<i>the light of the fires</i>	solas na dtinte
<i>above the places</i>	os cionn na n-áiteanna
<i>the width of the streets</i>	leithead na sráideanna

First declension nouns

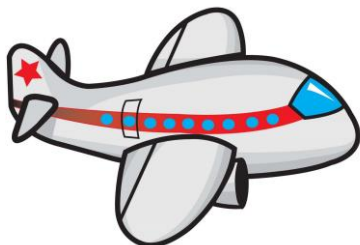
First declension nouns are masculine. The largest group form their (weak) common plural and genitive singular by making the final broad consonant slender.

the cloud **an scamall**

the cloud's shape **cruth an scamail**

the clouds **na scamail**

the clouds' colour **dath na scamall**



the airplane **an t-eitleán**

the airplane's wing **sciathán an eitleáin**

the airplanes **na heitleáin**

the airplanes' wings **sciatháin na n-eitleán**

the bird **an t-éan**

the bird's beak **gob an éin**

the birds **na héin**

the birds' singing **cannadh na n-éan**



the tree **an crann**

the tree's branch **craobh an chrainn**

the trees **na crainn**

the trees' leaves **duilliúr na gcrann**

the boat **an bád**

the boat's sail **seol an bháid**

the boats **na báid**

the boats' sails **seolta na mbád**



the bottle **an buidéal**

the bottleneck **scóig an bhuidéil**

the bottles **na buidéil**

the bottles' contents **ábhar na mbuidéal**

the bucket **an buicéad**

the bucket's handle **lámh an bhuicéid**

the buckets **na buicéid**

filling the buckets **ag líonadh na mbuicéad**





the man **an fear**

the man's son **mac an fhear**

the men **na fir**

the men's sons **mic na bhear**

the son **an mac**

the son's name **ainm an mhac**

the sons **na mic**

the sons' names **ainmneacha na mac**

the boy **an gasúr**

the boy's father **athair an ghasúir**

the boys **na gasúir**

the boys' shoes **bróga na ngasúr**

the purse **an sparán**

the purse's clasp **claspa an sparáin**

the purses **na sparáin**

size of the purses **méid na sparán**

the money **an t-airgead**

the amount of money **méid an airgid**



the pen **an peann**

the pen's lid **claibín an phinn**

the pens **na pinn**

the pens' lids **claibíní na bpeann**

the paper **an páipéar**

the sheet of paper **leathanach an pháipéir**

the papers **na páipéir**

contents of the papers **ábhair na bpáipéar**



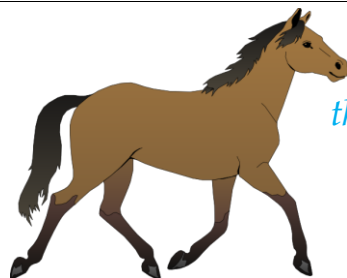
the book **an leabhar**

the book's title **teideal an leabhair**

the books **na leabhair**

reading the books **ag léamh na leabhar**





the horse **an** capall

the horse's mane moing **an** chapail

the horses **na** capaill

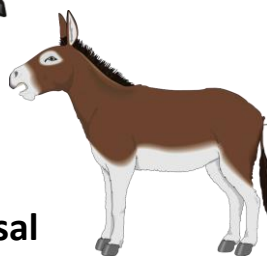
the horse-race rás **na** gcapall

the donkey **an** t-asail

the donkey's house teach **an** asail

the donkeys **na** hasail

riding *the* donkeys ag marcaíocht **na** n-asail



the fish **an** t-iasc

the fish fillet filéad **an** éisc

the fish(es) **na** héisc

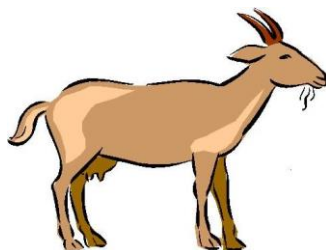
catching *the* fish(es) ag marú **na** n-iasc

the calf **an** t-uan

the calf's hoof crub **an** uain

the calves **na** huain

lowing *of the* calves géimneach **na** n-uan



the goat **an** gabhar

the goat's horns adharca **an** ghabhair

the goats **na** gabhair

the goats' pen cró **na** ngabhar

the (hunting) dog **an** gadhar

the dog's kennel conchró **an** ghadhair

the (hunting) dogs **na** gadhair

feeding *the* dogs ag cothú **na** ngadhar



the puppy **an** coileach

the puppy's tail eireaball **an** choiligh

the puppies **na** coiligh

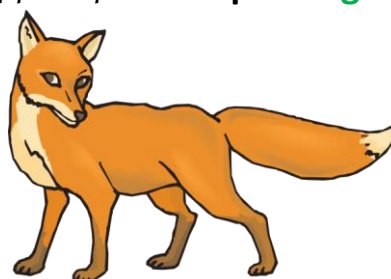
the puppies' paws lapaí **na** gcoileach

the fox **an** sionnach

the fox's tail eireaball **an** tsionnaigh

the foxes **na** sionnaigh

the foxes' den pluais **na** sionnach



Second declension nouns

First declension nouns are mainly feminine and form the genitive singular ending in **-e** or **-í**. The largest group have a (weak) common plural ending in **-a**.

the shoe **an bhróg**

the shoe's sole **bonn na bróige**

the shoes **na bróga**

the shoes' colour **dath na mbróg**



the bee **an bheach**

the bee's sting **cealg na beiche**

the bees **na beacha**

the bees' wax **céir na mbeach**

the harp **an chláirseach**

the harp's strings **téada na cláirsí**

the harps **na cláirseacha**

the music of harps **ceol na gcláirseach**



the hen **an chearc**

the hen's egg **ubh na circe**

the hens **na cearca**

the hen-coop **cúb na gcearc**

the stone **an chloch**

by the (rocky) shore **cois na cloiche**

the stone **na clocha**

the stone house **teach na gcloch**



the theatre **an amharclann**

the theatre's lights **cealg na hamharclainne**

the theatres **na hamharclanna**

the theatre(s') audience **lucht na n-amharclann**

the statue **an dealbh**

the statue's base **bonn na deilbhe**

the statues **na dealbha**

among the statues **i measc na ndealbha**



Third declension nouns

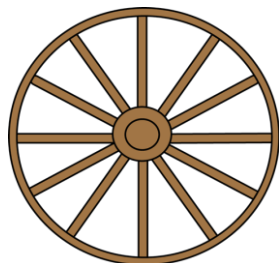
Third declension nouns mainly end in a slender consonant and form the genitive singular ending in **-a**. The largest group form their (strong) plural ending in **-í**.

the boy **an buachaill**

the boy's bag **mála an bhuachalla**

the boys **na buachaillí**

the boys' hats **hataí na mbuachaillí**



the wheel **an roth**

the wheel's spokes **spócaí an rotha**

the wheels **na rothaí**

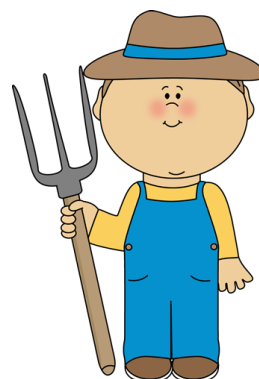
turning the wheels **ag casadh na rothaí**

the farmer **an feirmeoir**

the farmer's paddock **banrach an fheirmeora**

the farmers **na feirmeoirí**

the farmers' association **cumann na bhfeirmeoirí**



Fourth declension nouns

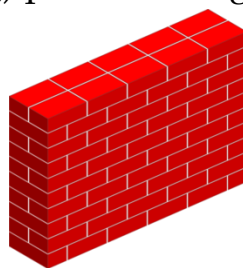
Fourth declension nouns mainly end in a vowel or **-ín**. There is no change for the genitive singular. Most form their (strong) plural ending in **-í**.

the wall **an balla**

the wall's height **airde an bhalla**

the walls **na ballaí**

the colour of the walls **dath na mballaí**



the girl **an cailín**

the girl's skirt **sciorta an chailín**

the girls **na cailíní**

the girls' dresses **gúnaí na gcailíní**

the fisherman **an t-iascaire**

the fisherman's rod **slat an iascaire**

the fishermen **na hiascairí**

the fishermen's boats **báid na n-iascairí**



Fifth declension nouns

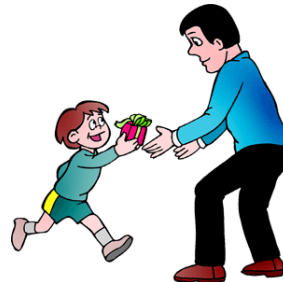
Fifth declension nouns are usually feminine. Many of them form the genitive singular by changing the final consonant from slender to broad, often adding a broad consonant. Many form their (strong) plural in **-acha**.

the father **an t-athair**

in the name of the Father **in ainm an Athar**

the fathers **na haithreacha**

fathers' day **lá na n-aithreacha**



the chair **an chathaoir**

the chair's leg **cos na cathaoireach**

the chairs **na cathaoireacha**

the game of (the) chairs **cluiche na gcathaoireacha**

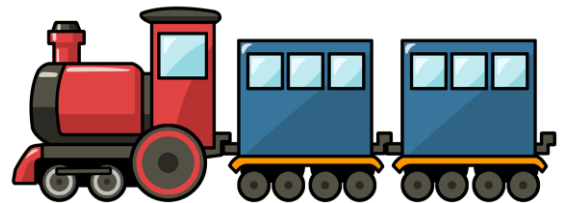


the train **an traein**

the train's engine **inneall na traenach**

the trains **na traenacha**

the train(s') timetable **amchlár na traenacha**

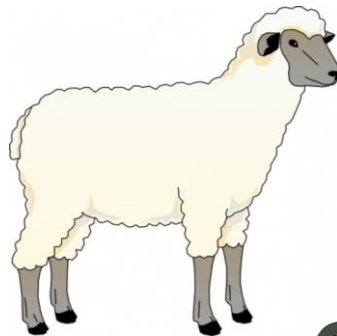


the sheep **an chaora**

the sheep's wool **olann na caorach**

the sheep **na caoraigh**

the sheep's milk **bainne na gcaoraigh**
(or **bainne na gcaorach**)



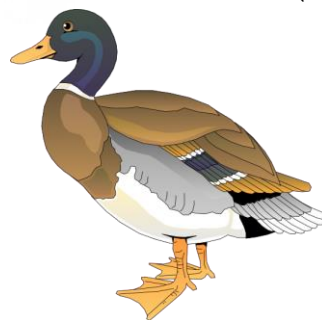
the duck **an lacha**

the duck's bill **gob na lachan**

the ducks **na lachain**

the ducks' liver **ae na lachain**

(or **ae na lachan**)



the factory **an monarcha**

the factory('s) worker **oibrí na monarchan**

the factories **na monarchana**

the factories' production **táirgeadh na monarchana**



21. Table of plurals

Díochlaonadh	Lagiolraí		
	-í-	-(n)a	-(a)í /-e
1^d -í- firinscneach	bád—bá id fear—f ir iasc—é isc coileach—coil igh cogadh—coga idh páipéar—páipé ir	cleas—cleas a úll—úll a	cogadh—coga í * leanbh—lean aí <i>*After the spelling reform of 1948, words ending in -idhe now end in -í.</i> doras—do irse bóthar—bó ithre
2^a -e (-í) baininscneach		cos—cos a bróg—bróg a clann — clann a scian—scean a * (tréaniolra) deoir—deor a súil—súil e * (g.pl. súl)	eaglais—eaglais í seachtain—seachtain í scornach—scorn aí * girseach—girs í * <i>*After the spelling reform of 1948, words ending in -ighe now end in -í.</i>
3^ú -a fir./bain.		gamhain—gamhn a flaith—flath a slíos—sleas a	dochtúir—dochtúir í múinteoir—múinteoir í siúinéir—siúinéir í beannacht—beannacht aí buachaill—buachaill í
4^ú - fir./bain.	(The regions shaded in gold indicate the most common plural form(s) for each declension.)		bosca—bosca í páiste—páist í comhairle—comhairl í cailín—cailín í ticéad—ticéad aí
5^ú -í- (go formhór)bain.	lacha—lach ain caora—caora igh cú—co in	ceathrú—ceathrú na monarcha—monarcha na	fiche—fich idí tríocha—tríoch aí ionga —ing ne cara—caird e

Tréaniolraí

<u>-(e)acha</u>	-(e/a)nna/nta	-t(h)e/-t(h)a
clár—clár acha tobar—toib reacha	bás—bás anna praghas — praghas anna carr — carr anna ponc — ponc anna bun — bun anna	seol—seol ta scéal—scéal ta cuan—cuan ta muilleann—muil te glór—glór tha céad—céad ta
craobh—craobh acha feirm—feirm eacha paidir—paidr eacha	áit—áit eanna breab—breab anna páirc—páirc eanna im—im eanna ^(fir.) uair—uair eanta	coill—coill te pian—pian ta sliabh—sléib hte ^(fir.) teach—tit he ^(fir.) spéir—spéar tha tír—tí ortha
altóir—altór acha admháil—admhál acha samhail—samhl acha anam—anam nacha feadaíl — feadaíol acha (Slender liquid consonants often become broad before adding a suffix.)	bláth—bláth anna sruth—sroth anna trá(igh)—trá(gha) nna * <i>*The spelling reform of 1948 removed a lot of silent consonants, so words like trá moved to the 4th declension.</i>	gleann—gleann ta fíon —fíon ta bliain—blian ta
teanga—teanga cha ainm—ainm neacha	cnó—cnó nna gé—gé anna trá—trá nna lá—laeth anta * (g.sing. lae) oíche—oíche anta	baile—bail te tine—tint te léine—léint te rí—rí the scéalaí—scéalait he ordú—ordait he cruinniú—cruinnit he
riail—rial acha cabhail—cabhl acha athair—ait reacha deartháir—deartháir eacha cathair—cathr acha abha(inn)—aibh neacha		

Cleachtadh

Change each article + noun sequence from the common case (in parentheses) into the genitive case.

1. ainm _____ (an buachaill)
2. ainm _____ (an múinteoir)
3. ainm _____ (an t-athair)
4. ainm _____ (an t-iascaire)
5. ainm _____ (an fear)
6. ainm _____ (an bhean)
7. ainm _____ (an bhialann)
8. ainm _____ (an sagart)
9. ainm _____ (an t-amhrán)
10. dath _____ (an gúna)
11. dath _____ (an gluaisteán)
12. dath _____ (an duilliúr)
13. dath _____ (an balla)
14. dath _____ (na bróga)
15. dath _____ (na stocaí)
16. dath _____ (na héin)

17. i lár _____ (an tsráid)
18. i lár _____ (an oíche)
19. i lár _____ (an pháirc)
20. i lár _____ (an Astráil)
21. i lár _____ (an chathair)
22. blas _____ (an oráiste)
23. blas _____ (an bradán)
24. blas _____ (an sú)
25. blas _____ (an bheoir)
26. blas _____ (an t-arán)
27. blas _____ (an t-im)
28. i ndiadh _____ (na peictiúir)
29. i ndiadh _____ (an bháisteach)
30. i ndiadh _____ (na páistí)
31. i ndiadh _____ (an cheolchoirm)
32. i ndiadh _____ (na mná)
33. i ndiadh _____ (na cloga)

22. Cardinal numbers with the article in the genitive case

The singular article, **an** (**na** for feminine genitive) precedes **aon**. It is generally translated into English as *the only*:

- In the common case, **an** causes **t-** to be added to **aon** before a masculine noun (but not in the genitive case).
- **aon** causes seimhiú

*The only table
in the room was broken.*

Bhí **an t-aon bhord amháin**
sa seomra briste.

*The legs of the only table
in the room were broken.*

Bhí cosa **an aon bhoird amháin**
sa seomra briste.

*The eleven windows
in the house were broken.*

Bhí **an aon fhuinneog deas**
sa teach briste.

*All (of the) eleven windows
in the house were broken.*

Bhí iomlán **na haon fhuinneoige déag**
sa teach briste.

The singular article, **an** precedes **dá** (or **dhá**), which resists seimhiú after **an**):

- Instead of the common case, after **dá**, certain nouns may be in the dative singular (second declension nouns that normally occur in pairs).
- **dá** causes seimhiú; the noun remains in the common (or dative) singular

Both (the two) shoes are worn.

Tá **an dá bhró(i)g ídithe.**

The soles of both shoes are worn.

Tá boinn **an dá bhró(i)g ídithe.**

These twelve boats are under repair.

Tá **an dá bhád déag seo faoi dheisiú.**

*The sails of those twelve boats are
under repair.*

Tá seoltaí **an dá bhád déag siúd**
faoi dheisiú.

The plural article **na** precedes **trí** to **deich** (including 13 to 19):

- In the common case, **na** causes **h** to be added to numbers beginning with a vowel
- In the genitive case, **na** causes **urú**, (or **n** to be added to numbers beginning with a vowel)
- The normal rules apply for numbers causing séimhiú and **urú** to the noun they qualify; the noun remains in the common singular form (except for 'special' plural forms with numbers).

The three doors are white.

Tá **na trí dhoras bán.**

The handles of the three doors are brown.

Tá murláin **na dtrí dhoras donn.**

<i>The four of them</i> were there.	Bhí na ceithre cinn ann.
All <i>(of the) fourteen of them</i> are going to town.	Tá iomlán na gceithre cinn déag ag dúl go dtí an baile mór.
<i>The thirty-six eggs</i> are in cartons.	Tá na sé huibhe is tríocha i gcartáin.
He spent the beginning <i>of those ten years</i> in America.	Chaith sé tús na ndeich mbliana sin i Meiriceá.
<i>The twenty-eight cows</i> are in the field.	Tá na hocht mbó is fiche sa pháirc.
The calves <i>of the eighteen cows</i> are in the field.	Tá gamhna na nocht mbó déag sa pháirc.

The singular article, **an**, precedes multiples of ten (except **deich**). Even in genitive constructions, use the common singular noun:

<i>The twenty hens</i> are laying.	Tá an fiche cearc ag breith.
These are the eggs <i>of the twenty hens</i> .	Seo iad uibheacha an fiche cearc .
<i>The seventy cows</i> are in the field.	Tá an seachtó bó sa pháirc.
The milk <i>of the seventy cows</i> is stored in this tank.	Tá bainne an seachtó bó feistithe san umar seo.

The singular article **an** precedes the singular forms of **céad**, **míle** and **mílliún**, (causing **seimhiú** in genitive constructions). The plural article **na** precedes the plural forms: **na céadta**, **mílte**, **mílliúin** (*the hundreds, thousands, millions*). As these words are nouns, either form usually precedes a noun in the genitive plural, although the common singular is often used instead.

<i>the (one) hundred horses</i>	an céad capall
<i>the stables of the hundred horses</i>	stablaí an chéad capall
<i>the hundreds of horses</i>	na céadta capall
<i>the stables of hundreds of horses</i>	stablaí na céadta capall
<i>the one hundred boys</i>	an céad buachaill(i)
<i>the names of the hundred girls</i>	ainmneacha an chéad cailín(i)
<i>the hundreds of years</i>	na céadta blianta/bliain
<i>the period of hundreds of years</i>	tréimhse na céadta blianta/bliain
<i>the (one) thousand metres</i>	an míle méadar
<i>the distance of a thousand metres</i>	fad an mhíle méadar
<i>the thousands of people</i>	na mílte daoine/duine
<i>the lives of thousands of people</i>	beatha na mílte daoine/duine
<i>the (one) million tons</i>	an milliún tonna(i)

<i>the costs of the million tons</i>	costas an mhilliún tonna(í)
<i>the millions of grains</i>	na milliúin gráinne/gráinní
<i>the weight of millions of grains</i>	meáchan na milliún gráinne/gráinní

23. The dative case

The dative case has all but disappeared in conversational Irish, except for the affect of *séimhiú* and *urú*. However, you'll still find it in formal written Irish such as in poetry, in older texts, and a few particular cases.

The dative case is used where the noun is the *indirect object* of the verb. In practical terms, this means after the following prepositions:

<i>on</i>	ar	<i>without</i>	gan	<i>before</i>	roimh
<i>to, for</i>	do	<i>between, among</i>	idir	<i>over, beyond</i>	thar
<i>of, from</i>	de	<i>as, like</i>	mar	<i>though</i>	trí
<i>under</i>	faoi	<i>from</i>	ó	<i>about</i>	um

Each of these prepositions causes *séimhiú* to a following noun (except for a few stock idioms):

on a boat **ar bháid** *for Kate* **do Cháit**

A couple of (fifth declension) words have a special dative form*:

in Ireland **in Éirinn** *for a friend* **do charaid**

Each of these prepositions causes *urú* to a following noun when it follows the singular article **an**:

under the chair **faoin gcathaoir** *from the box* **ón mbosca**

Preposition + (article) an = urú

Exceptions:

Don (*to/for the*) and **den** (*from the*) cause *séimhiú* to a following noun:

Thóg mé den pháiste é. *I took it from the child.*

Thug mé don mháthair é. *I gave it to the mother.*

Except in Connemara (where the normal rules apply), **i** (*in*) causes *urú* and **sa** (short for **insan** = *in the*) causes *séimhiú* to a following noun:

i mBaile Átha Cliath *in Dublin.*

sa bhaile *at home*

Formal dative noun endings

* In formal Irish and in Munster, *second* and *fifth declension* nouns form the *dative singular* by changing a final *broad* consonant to *slender*. (In Connacht, these are often the forms used for the *common singular*.)

faoin gcloich *under the stone,* **ar a chois** *on his leg*

In very formal (literary) Irish, nouns form the *dative plural* by adding **-(a)ibh**. The common plural is now used in general speech and writing.

faoina clochaibh *under the stones,* **ar a chosaibh** *on his legs*

Cleachtadh

Change the second noun in each of the following phrases to its correct plural form. Do not change the first noun.

1 praghas an phionta

2 súile an chailín

3 nead an éin

4 mapa na farraige

5 fuinneoga an tsiopa

6 doirse na hoifige

7 obair an chumadóra

8 ag croitheadh na láimhe

9 áille na trá

10 dath an bhalla

11 nótaí an rúnaí

12 líonta an iascaire

13 ag biorú na scine

14 éide na banaltra

15 ag insint an scéil

16 glam an mhadra

17 daonra na cathrach

18 fad an dréimire

19 bróga na mná

20 ainm an pháiste

Insert the word(s) in parentheses into the larger phrase, changing it to the genitive form.

- 1 (an ubh) Ná bí ag briseadh _____.
- 2 (an mhí) Bhí siad anseo i lár _____.
- 3 (cloigeann) Tá tinneas _____ orm.
- 4 (na páistí) Tá Máire ag dúiseacht _____.
- 5 (an doras) Tá dath _____ go hálainn.
- 6 (an t-airgead) An bhfuil tú ag comhaireamh _____?
- 7 (na coinnle) Tá mé ag lasadh _____.
- 8 (an múinteoir) Sin é teach _____.
- 9 (an oifig) Dún doras _____ más é do thoil é.
- 10 (an tseachtain) Beidh muid ag caitheamh _____ i Londain.
- 11 (na gasúir) Sin é seomra _____ é.
- 12 (an cat) Tá cos _____ briste.
- 13 (an tsiopadóireacht) Tá mé ag déanamh _____.
- 14 (an t-im) Tá praghas _____ ró-ard.
- 15 (an cogadh) Bhí siad i Sasana tar éis _____.
- 16 (an samhradh) Bhí sí anseo ag tús _____.
- 17 (an Ghaeilge) Tá siad ag obair ar son _____.
- 18 (an áit) Tá muintir _____ sásta.
- 19 (an chathair) Tá sí ina cónaí i lár _____.
- 20 (an fhírinne) Tá mé ag inseacht _____.