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gen·der  (jĕn dər)

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n.

1. Grammar

a. A grammatical category, often designated as male, female, or neuter, used in the classification of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and, in some languages, verbs that may be arbitrary or based on characteristics such as sex or animacy and that determines agreement with or selection of modifiers, referents, or grammatical forms.

b. The fact of being classified as belonging to such a category: *agreement in gender, number, and case.*

2.

a. Either of the two divisions, designated female and male, by which most organisms are classified on the basis of their reproductive organs and functions; sex.

b. One's identity as female or male or as neither entirely female nor entirely male.

c. Females or males considered as a group: *Students lined up with the genders in different lines.*

tr.v. **gen·dered, gen·der·ing, gen·ders**

Archaic

To engender.

[Middle English *gendre*, from Old French, kind, gender, from Latin *genus*, *gener-*; see **gena-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

gen der·less *adj.*

Usage Note: Some people maintain that the word *sex* should be reserved for reference to the biological aspects of being male or female or to sexual activity, and that the word *gender* should be used only to refer to sociocultural roles. Accordingly, one would say *The effectiveness of the treatment appears to depend on the sex of the patient* and *In society, gender roles are clearly defined*. In some situations this distinction avoids ambiguity, as in *gender research*, which is clear in a way that *sex research* is not. The distinction can be problematic, however. Linguistically, there isn't any real difference between *gender bias* and *sex bias*, and it may seem contrived to insist that *sex* is incorrect in this instance.

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Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

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The Indo-European appendix covers nearly half of the Indo-European roots that have left their mark on English words. A more complete treatment of Indo-European roots and the English words derived from them is available in our [Dictionary of Indo-European Roots](#).

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