GENDER GENERALIZATIONS FOR GERMAN NOUNS

1) German nouns are masculine (der), feminine (die), or neuter (das). The plural form for any German noun is always die.

2) Masculine by meaning are:
   a) Nouns of male persons and animals
   b) Most instruments or inanimate agents ending in -er
   c) Seasons, months, days of the week, points of the compass, precipitation
   d) Types of earth or stone
   e) Mountains
   f) Makes of cars

3) Masculine by form are:
   a) Nouns ending in -ich, -ig, -ing, -ling
   b) Foreign nouns ending in -ant, -ast, -ismus, -ist, -or
   c) Most nouns “formed from strong verb stems to which nothing has been added.”

4) Feminine by meaning are:
   a) Names of female persons and animals
   b) Trees and many flowers
   c) Cardinal numbers
   d) Ships named after countries or towns and many others
   e) Motorcycles, and most makes of airplanes

5) Feminine in form are:
   a) Most nouns ending in -e
   b) Nouns with the suffixes -ei, -heit, -in, -schaft, -ung
   c) Foreign nouns ending in -a, -anz, -enz, -ie, -ik, -ion, -tät, -ur

6) Neuter by meaning are:
   a) Most terms for the young (human and animal)
   b) Continents, countries (some are feminine; die USA is plural), towns
   c) Metals and other chemical elements
   d) Other parts of speech used as nouns (das Lesen)
   e) Letters of the alphabet
   f) Fractions (viertel)
   g) Onomatopoetic words (words imitating animal or other sounds)

7) Neuter by form are:
   a) Collective nouns with the prefix Ge- (Gebirge)
   b) Nouns ending in -nis
   c) Nouns ending in -tum
   d) Diminutives ending in -chen, -el, -erl, -icht, -le, -lein, or -li
   e) Foreign nouns ending in -at, -ett, -fon or -phon, -ma, -ment, -um, -ium

brh/9/98