

Singular & Plural Nouns

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Singular Noun Definition: When a noun means one only, it is said to be singular.

Examples: boy, girl, book, church, box

Plural Noun Definition: When a noun means more than one, it is said to be plural.

Examples: boys, girls, books, churches

Rule #1

The plural of nouns is usually formed by adding **s** to a singular noun.

Example: lamp, lamps; cat, cats; fork, forks; flower, flowers; pen, pens

Exercise: Write the plural of each of these nouns

chair	star	farm	storm	door
rock	owner	paper	cup	bear

Rule #2

Nouns ending in **s**, **z**, **x**, **sh**, and **ch** form the plural by adding **es**.

Example: moss, mosses buzz, buzzes box, boxes
dish, dishes church, churches

Exercise: Write the plural of each of these nouns

dress	brush	hex	wish	class
fox	cross	bench	bush	ax
grass	mantis	glass		

Special Note:

If you add **s** to such nouns as fox, bush, and bench, you will find that you cannot pronounce them without making an additional syllable. This is why such nouns form the plural by adding **es**.

Quick Review

Exercise: Tell if the following nouns are singular or plural

box	cats	slipper	forks	books
chair	desk	houses	paper	wagon
lamps	shoes	garden	horses	dress
dog	carts	kitchen	pony	glass
chair	star	pencil	girl	boy
ax	bush	coat	tree	bench
sketch	owner	touch	latch	mug
bells	churches	wagons	coals	pictures
clocks	boxes	kitchens	basins	chairs
days	houses	pencils	trees	tables

Rule #3

Nouns ending in **y** preceded by a consonant is formed into a plural by changing **y** to **ies**. Examples: lady, ladies; city, cities; army, armies

Exercise: Write the plural of the following words

fly	baby	pony	injury	cherry
lady	beauty	story	history	berry
city	sky	duty	study	theory

Rule #4

Nouns ending in **y** preceded by a vowel form their plurals by adding **s**. Example: boy, boys; day, days

Exercise: Write the plural of the following words

day	toy	essay	turkey	chimney
play	joy	valley	alley	volley

Rule #5

Most nouns ending in **o** preceded by a consonant is formed into a plural by adding **es**. Example: hero; heroes; grotto, grottoes

motto	calico	buffalo	hero	potato
cargo	volcano	grotto	mosquito*	tomato
halo*	tornado*	buffalo*	portico*	veto

*may add s or es

The following are among those that add **s** only

canto	solo	piano	lasso
halo	memento	albino	sirocco

Special Note:

Most nouns ending in **o** preceded by a vowel is formed into a plural by adding **s**.
Example: folio, folios; cameo; cameos; studio, studios; portfolio, portfolios

Rule #6

Some nouns ending in **f** or **fe** are made plural by changing **f** or **fe** to **ves**.
Example: beef, beeves; wife, wives

Exercise: Write the plural of the following words

calf	self	leaf	sheaf	life
loaf	shelf	half	wolf	knife
elf	half	thief	wife	gulf
chief	dwarf*	proof	turf	

Exceptions: The following may form their plurals by adding **s**.

chief, chiefs	fife, fifes	mischief, mischiefs
hoof, hoofs	roof, roofs	grief, griefs
kerchief, kerchiefs	safe, safes	

IRREGULAR PLURALS

man, men	foot, feet	mouse, mice
woman, women	tooth, teeth	louse, lice
child, children	ox, oxen	goose, geese

The following nouns have no singular:

scissors	oats	tongs	dregs	trousers
pinchers	bellows	snuffers	cattle	shears
measles	mumps	vituals	tweezers	vespers

Some nouns are always singular. Some of these nouns may be used in the plural when different kinds are meant as sugars, coffees, cottons

gold, silver, wheat, corn, molasses, copper, sugar, cotton
news, gallows, mathematics, ethics (other words ending in **ics**)

Singular nouns use **this** and **that**.

Plural nouns use **these** and **those**.

Special note:

singular

plural

son-in-law

sons-in-law

daughter-in-law

daughters-in-law

maid of honor

maids of honor

secretary of state

secretaries of state

In forming the plural of proper names with a title, some pluralize the title, e.g., **the Misses Brown**.

Others pluralize the name, e.g., **the Miss Browns**.

If a title belongs to each of the two names, it should take the **s** in forming the plural, e.g., **Drs. Scott**.

Flashcards

Cut on solid lines and fold on the dotted lines.

Front

Back

<p>Singular Noun Definition</p> <p>© Beverly Schmitt 1997-2002, all rights reserved</p>	<p>When a noun means one only, it is said to be singular.</p> <p>Examples: boy, girl, book, church, box</p>
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<p>Plural Noun Definition</p> <p>© Beverly Schmitt 1997-2002, all rights reserved</p>	<p>When a noun means more than one, it is said to be plural.</p> <p>Examples: boys, girls, books, churches</p>
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<p>How are the plurals of most nouns formed?</p> <p>© Beverly Schmitt 1997-2002, all rights reserved</p>	<p>Rule #1: The plural of nouns is usually formed by adding s to a singular noun</p> <p>Example: lamp, lamps; cat, catss; fork, forkss; flower, flowerss; pen, penss</p>
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<p>How is a plural made when a noun ends in <i>s, z, x, sh, and ch</i>?</p> <p>© Beverly Schmitt 1997-2002, all rights reserved</p>	<p>Rule #2: Nouns ending in s, z, x, sh, and ch form the plural by adding es.</p> <p>Ex: moss, mosses buzz, buzzess; box, boxess dish, dishess; church, churchess</p>
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Why do you add *es* to make a plural made when a noun ends in *s, z, x, sh,* and *ch*?

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If you add **s** to such nouns as fox, bush, and bench, you will find that you cannot pronounce them without making an additional syllable. This is why such nouns form the plural by adding **es**.

How do you form a plural when a noun ends in *y* and is preceded by a consonant?

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Rule #3: Nouns ending in **y** preceded by a consonant is formed into a plural by changing **y** to **ies**.

Ex: lady, **ladies**; city, **cities**;
army, **armies**; baby, **babies**

How do you form a plural when a noun ends in *y* and is preceded by a vowel?

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Rule #4: Nouns ending in **y** preceded by a vowel form their plurals by adding **s**.

Example: boy, **boys**; day, **days**

How do you form a plural when a noun ends in *o* and is preceded by a consonant?

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Rule #5: Most nouns ending in **o** preceded by a consonant is formed into a plural by adding **es**.

Ex: hero; **heroes**; grotto, **grottoes**

How do you form a plural when a noun ends in *o* and is preceded by a vowel?

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Most nouns ending in **o** preceded by a vowel is formed into a plural by adding **s**.

Ex: folio, folios;
cameo; cameos; studio, studios;
portfolio, portfolios

How do you form a plural when a noun ends in *f* or *fe*?

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Rule #6: Some nouns ending in **f** or **fe** are made plural by changing **f** or **fe** to **ves**.

Ex: beef, bee**ves**; wife, w**ives**

Are there any exceptions to the *f* or *fe* to *ves* rule?

If so, give an example.

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Exceptions: The following may form their plurals by adding **s**.

chief, chiefs; fife, fives
mischief, mischiefs; hoof, hoofs
roof, roofs; grief, griebs

Give a couple of examples of irregular plurals.

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IRREGULAR PLURALS

man, men; woman, women;
child, children; foot, feet; tooth,
teeth; mouse, mice; louse, lice; ox,
oxen; goose, geese

<p>Give a couple of examples of nouns that have no singular.</p> <p>© Beverly Schmitt 1997-2002, all rights reserved</p>	<p>nouns that have no singular</p> <p>scissors, oats, tongs, dregs, trousers, pinchers, bellows, snuffers, cattle, shears, measles, mumps, victuals, tweezers, vespers</p>
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<p>Give a couple of examples of nouns that are always singular.</p> <p>© Beverly Schmitt 1997-2002, all rights reserved</p>	<p>Some nouns are always singular.</p> <p>gold, silver, wheat, corn, molasses, copper, sugar, cotton</p> <p>Some of these nouns may be used in the plural when different kinds are meant as sugars, coffees, cottons</p>
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<p>When do you use <i>this</i> and <i>that</i>?</p> <p>© Beverly Schmitt 1997-2002, all rights reserved</p>	<p>Singular nouns use this and that</p>
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<p>When do you use <i>these</i> and <i>those</i>?</p> <p>© Beverly Schmitt 1997-2002, all rights reserved</p>	<p>Plural nouns use these and those.</p>
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Nouns taken from foreign languages without change generally retain their original plurals.

<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
alumna	alumnae	focus	foci
formula	formulae	radius	radii
nebula	nebulae	stimulus	stimuli
vertebra	vertebrae	terminus	termini
automaton	automata	amanuensis	amanuenses
curriculum	curricula	analysis	analyses
datum	data	axis	axes
erratum	errata	basis	bases
genus	genera	crisis	crises
gymnasium	gymnasia	ellipsis	ellipses
phenomenon	phenomena	hypothesis	hypotheses
stratum	strata	parenthesis	parentheses
alumnus	alumni	thesis	theses

Some nouns from foreign languages have both an English and a foreign plural.

<i>Singular</i>	<i>English Plural</i>	<i>Foreign Plural</i>
beau	beaus	beaux
cherub	cherubs	cherubim
formula	formulas	formulae
focus	focuses	foci
gymnasium	gymnasiums	gymnasia
memorandum	memorandums	memoranda
medium	mediums	media
radius	radiuses	radii
spectrum	spectrums	spectra
vortex	vortexes	vortices