



**IIT Madras**  
ONLINE DEGREE

# Aspiration in English Words

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# Some English Words

- Pen

- Pin

- Pan

- Car

- Can

- King

# Aspirated or non-aspirated ?

Pi

Pan

Pin

Pot

Top

Cot

Cat

Tame

Kite

Spy

Span

Spin

Spot

Stop

Scot

Cube

Happy

Lucky

[p], [t], [k] .... Voiceless stop sounds

- [p]                      [p<sup>h</sup>]
- [t]                      [t<sup>h</sup>]
- [k]                      [k<sup>h</sup>]

# Understanding Plurals in English

- In words ending in sounds /p/, /t/, and /k/, the plural markers sound as /s/.
- Every where else the plural marker in English is /z/.
- There does not seem to be much of a difference between /z/ and /iz/.

# Plural rule

- The rule is:
  - /z/ becomes /s/ (in the environment of /p/, /t/, /k/)
  - Everywhere else it remains /z/.
- The reason for this is the following: /p/, /t/, and /k/ are voiceless sounds, where /z/ is a voiced sound. In the environment of a voiceless sound, a voiced plural marker becomes voiceless. The default agreement is a voiced sound.

# Rules:

- Voiceless stops are aspirated at the beginning of a word, and at the beginning of a stressed syllable.
- Voiceless stops are unaspirated at the beginning of an unstressed syllable. They're also unaspirated in any other position, like at the end of a syllable or the end of a word.
- Even if a syllable is stressed, a voiceless stop is unaspirated if it follows [s].
- Voiced stops are never aspirated. They're always unaspirated.