

A plural noun

A plural noun is a noun that refers to more than one person, place, thing, or idea. Most singular nouns are made plural by adding a suffix, usually *–s* or *–es*. For example, the singular noun *dog* takes the plural form *dogs*, as in *three dogs*. However, there are irregular plural nouns that take unique forms.

Most singular **nouns** are made plural by simply putting an *–s* at the end. There are many different rules regarding pluralization depending on what letter a noun ends in. Irregular nouns do not follow plural noun rules, so they must be memorized or looked up in the dictionary.

What are plural nouns?

A noun is plural when it represents two or more people, places, things, or ideas. You can identify most plural nouns because they end in *–s* or *–es*, although there are plenty of exceptions. In particular, [irregular plural nouns](#) each have their own special plural forms, such as *child* and its plural form, *children*.

Plural nouns vs. singular nouns

English distinguishes grammatical nouns as either singular or plural. Singular nouns represent one of something.

one car

a friend

this daisy

Plural nouns, on the other hand, represent two or more of something.

five cars

a few friends

these daisies

You can tell the difference between most singular and plural nouns by how the word ends, except for irregular nouns.

Plural nouns vs. possessive nouns

Possessive nouns are nouns that show ownership, usually with an –'s at the end. So if you had a friend named Marja and Marja owned a bike, you would write:

Marja's bike

Plural nouns are often confused with possessive nouns because both usually end in –s. However, the major **difference between plural and possessive nouns is the apostrophe;**

possessive nouns have it, but plural nouns don't (unless they're plural possessive nouns).

[singular] *boss*

[singular possessive] *boss's*

[plural] *bosses*

[plural possessive] *bosses'*

How do plural nouns work?

To make a regular noun plural, you add *-s* or *-es* to the end, depending on the word's ending. Sometimes, letters of the original word get changed to make the plural form, such as *half* and its plural form, *halves*. We explain which words get which suffixes in the next section.

Irregular plural nouns are an exception. Each irregular plural noun has its own unique plural form, such as *mouse* and its plural, *mice*, or *goose* and its plural, *geese*.

Most nouns can be turned into plural nouns, including [collective nouns](#) that represent groups.

one team

two teams

However, [mass nouns](#), also known as uncountable nouns or non-count nouns, like *art*, usually aren't expressed as plurals, even when they represent multiple things.

Plural noun rules

There are many plural noun rules, and because we use nouns so frequently when writing, it's important to know all of them! The correct [spelling of plurals](#) usually depends on what letter the singular noun ends in.

1 To make regular nouns plural, add *-s* to the end.

cat – cats

house – houses

2 If the singular noun ends in *-s*, *-ss*, *-sh*, *-ch*, *-x*, or *-z*, you usually add *-es* to the end to make it plural.

iris – irises

truss – trusses

marsh – marshes

lunch – lunches

tax – taxes

blitz – blitzes

3 In some cases, singular nouns ending in *-s* or *-z* require that you double the *-s* or *-z* prior to adding the *-es* for pluralization.

bus – busses

fez – fezzes

4 For most nouns that end with *-f* or *-ef*, you add an *-s* to form the plural version. Be aware of exceptions, however. For some nouns ending this way, you must change the *-f* or *-ef* to *-ve* before adding the *-s*.

roof – roofs

belief – beliefs

chef – chefs

chief – chiefs

Exceptions:

wife – wives

wolf – wolves

5 If a singular noun ends in *-y* and the letter before the *-y* is a consonant, you usually change the ending to *-ies* to make the noun plural.

city – cities

puppy – puppies

6 If the singular noun ends in *-y* and the letter before the *-y* is a vowel, simply add an *-s* to make it plural.

ray – rays

boy – boys

7 If the singular noun ends in *-o*, you usually add *-es* to make it plural.

potato – potatoes

tomato – tomatoes

Exceptions:

photo – photos

piano – pianos

halo – halos

With the unique word *volcano*, you can apply the standard pluralization for words that end in *–o* or not. It's your choice! Both of the following are correct:

volcanoes

volcanos

8 If the singular noun ends in *–us*, the plural ending is frequently *–i*.

cactus – cacti

focus – foci

9 If the singular noun ends in *–is*, the plural ending is *–es*.

analysis – analyses

ellipsis – *ellipses*

10 If the singular noun ends in *–on*, the plural ending is usually *–a*.

phenomenon – phenomena

criterion – criteria

11 Some nouns don't change at all when they're pluralized.

sheep – sheep

series – series

species – species

deer – deer

You need to see these nouns in context to identify them as singular or plural. Consider the following sentence:

Mark caught one fish, but I caught three fish.

However, when it comes to fish, things can get [a little complicated](#).

Plural noun rules for irregular nouns

Irregular nouns follow no specific rules, so it's best to memorize these or look up the proper pluralization in the dictionary.

child – children

goose – geese

man – men

woman – women

tooth – teeth

foot – feet

mouse – mice

person – people

Plural noun FAQs

What is a plural noun?

A plural noun is the form of a noun used to show there is more than one person, place, thing, or idea. Most nouns simply add *–s* or *–es* to the end to become plural.

What is an example of a plural noun?

Kids is the plural noun form of *kid*. Some nouns have an irregular plural form; for instance, the plural noun of *child* is *children*, not *childs*.

What is the difference between singular and plural nouns?

Singular nouns represent only one thing, but plural nouns represent more than one. If someone stands alone, we call them a *person* (singular), but if there's more than one person, we call them *people* (plural).