



PLURAL NOUNS

SPELLING AND PRONUNCIATION LESSON

[YOUTUBE.COM/ENGLISHWITHLUCY](https://www.youtube.com/englishwithlucy)

In this lesson, you're learning about the spelling and pronunciation of plural nouns. You'll learn about the three different ways to pronounce the final -s in plural nouns and the different spellings that some nouns have in their plural form.

PLURAL NOUNS

Plural nouns are the form that tells us there is more than one of something. With regular nouns, we simply add **s** to make them plural.

One book, two books.

One dog, two dogs.

One house, two houses.

There are three different ways to pronounce the **s** at the end of nouns: **/s/** as in books, **/z/** as in dogs, and **/ɪz/** as in houses.

Irregular plural nouns are not made by simply adding s. You sometimes need to add a letter or two or completely change the spelling.

One baby, two babies

One knife, two knives

One church, two churches



/s/

First, we're looking at plural nouns ending in the sound /s/. This sound is like the noise a snake makes: sssss!

We use the /s/ sound if the sound before the s ending is /f/, /k/, /p/, /t/ or /θ/.

All of these sounds are voiceless. This means that your vocal cords don't vibrate when you pronounce them because you make the sound using air. You can check this by putting your hand gently on your throat and saying the sound.

When a sound is voiced, you'll feel your throat vibrate a little, like with the letters /m/ and /n/.

Here are some words that use the /s/ sound for the plural noun.

belief /bɪ'li:f/ - beliefs /bɪ'li:fs/

book /bʊk/ - books /bʊks/

cup /kʌp/ - cups /kʌps/

bat /bæt/ - bats /bæts/

moth /mɒθ/ - moths /mɒθs/



/z/

The second sound is /z/. This is like the sound a bee makes: zzz!

We use the /z/ sound when the last sound before the plural s is /b/, /d/, /g/, /l/, /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, /r/, /ð/, /v/, /w/ or a vowel sound. Remember that voiced means there's a slight vibration in your throat when you say the letter.

Here are some examples of words that use the /z/ sound in the plural.

crab /kræb/ - crabs /kræbz /

bed /bed/ - beds /bedz /

dog /dɒg/ - dogs /dɒgz /

hill /hɪl/ - hills /hɪlz /

dream /dri:m/ - dreams /dri:mz /

pen /pen/ - pens /penz /

king /kɪŋ/ - kings /kɪŋz /

year /jɪə/ - years /jɪəz /

clothes /kləʊðz /

glove /glʌv/ - gloves /glʌvz /

marshmallow /ˌmɑ:ʃmæləʊ/ -

marshmallows /ˌmɑ:ʃmæləʊz /

bee /bi:/ - bees /bi:z /

boy /bɔɪ/ - boys /bɔɪz /

shoe /ʃu:/ - shoes /ʃu:z /



SPELLING CHANGES WITH /Z/

Some words change their spellings when we make them plural. Two examples from earlier were:

baby - babies /beɪbiz/

knife - knives /naɪvz/

To make the word **baby** plural, we removed the **y** and added **ies**. We do this when the letter before the **y** is a consonant, like the **b** in **baby**. Some other examples are:

puppy - puppies /pʌpɪz/

lady - ladies /leɪdɪz/

blueberry - blueberries /bluːbərɪz/

When a word ends in **ies**, the pronunciation is /z/, even if the letter before it is normally voiceless, like with **puppies** or

ability - abilities /əˈbɪlɪtɪz/

To make the word **knife** plural, we remove the **fe** and add **ves**. This often happens when a noun ends in **f** or **fe**.

Take a look at these examples:

loaf /ləʊf/ - loaves /ləʊvz/

life /laɪf/ - lives /laɪvz/

Wolf /wʊlf/ - wolves /wʊlvz/

But there are lots of words that end in **f** that we don't change.



Beliefs is one. Another is **handcuffs** and another is **chefs**. If you're not sure, take a look in the dictionary.

Finally, we're looking at words ending in **o**. When these words are plural, they use the **/z/** sound, but the spelling is sometimes different.

For some words, we simply add **s**.

piano //pɪ'ænəʊ/ - **pianos** /pɪ'ænəʊz/

radio /reɪdɪəʊ/ - **radios** /reɪdɪəʊz/

photo /fəʊtəʊ/ - **photos** /fəʊtəʊz/

And for other words, we add **es**.

potato /pə'teɪtəʊ/ - **potatoes** /pə'teɪtəʊz/

tomato /tə'mɑ:təʊ/ - **tomatoes** /tə'mɑ:təʊz/

hero /hɪərəʊ/ - **heroes** /hɪərəʊz/

/ɪz/

The final sound is **/ɪz/**. This sound is special because it adds a syllable to a noun when we make it plural. One example is **church** and **churches**.

We use the **/ɪz/** sound when a noun ends in one of these sounds: **/s/**, **/dʒ/**, **/z/**, **/tʃ/** and **/ʃ/**.

When we are writing the word, we either add **s** or **es**. If a word already ends in **e**, we simply add **s**:



bridge /'brɪdʒ/ - bridges /'brɪdʒɪz/
chance /'tʃɑːns/ - chances /'tʃɑːnsɪz/
prize /'praɪz/ - prizes /'praɪzɪz/

With other words, we add **es**:

kiss /'kɪs/ - kisses /'kɪsɪz
watch /'wɒtʃ/ - watches /'wɒtʃɪz
box /'bɒks/ - boxes /'bɒksɪz
dish /'dɪʃ/ - dishes /'dɪʃɪz/

Here are some more plural nouns that end in the /ɪz/ sound:

match /'mætʃ/ - matches /'mætʃɪz/
fox /'fɒks/ - foxes /'fɒksɪz/
change /'tʃeɪndʒ/ - changes /'tʃeɪndʒɪz/
fence /'fens/ - fences /'fensɪz/
cheese /'tʃiːz/ - cheeses /'tʃiːzɪz/
orange /'ɒrɪndʒ/ - oranges /'ɒrɪndʒɪz/
witch /'wɪtʃ/ - witches /'wɪtʃɪz/



Activity

What is the plural form of these nouns?

1. country
a. countrys b. countris c. countries d. countrees
2. day
a. days b. dayz c. dais d. daies
3. lunch
a. lunches b. lunchez c. lunchies d. lunches
4. story
a. stories b. storys c. storiez d. stores
5. scarf
a. scarfes b. scarves c. scarvez d. scarfies
6. snake
a. snakez b. snakies c. snakes d. snaks
7. echo
a. echoes b. echeos c. echoies d. echoz
8. self
a. selfs b. selfz c. selvez d. selves
9. sandwich
a. sandwichs b. sandwiches c. sandwichies d. sandwiches
10. hat
a. hatz b. haties c. hats d. hates

Answers

1. countries 2. days 3. lunches 4. stories 5. scarves 6. snakes 7. echoes 8. selves 9. sandwiches 10. hats