

# The plural of nouns

## I. General Rule

English countable nouns have two numbers – the Singular and the Plural. The plural of English nouns is formed by adding the ending *-s/-es* to the Singular.

N+ – s /– es

## II. Ways of Pronunciation

The ending *-s/-es* may be pronounced as

[s] after voiceless consonants (other than sibilants).

E.g. *lamp* – *lamps* [s]

*book* – *books* [s]

[z] after voiced consonants (other than sibilants) and vowels.

E.g. *bed* – *beds* [z]

*bee* – *bees* [z]

[ɪz] after sibilants (s, z, ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ)

E.g. *rose* – *roses* [ɪz]

*bridge* – *bridges* [ɪz]

## III. Particular Cases of Spelling

The ending *-es* is added to nouns ending in:

### 1. sibilants

E.g. *bush* – *bushes*

*class* – *classes*

*box* – *boxes*

*watch* – *watches*

*horse* – *horses*

*bridge* – *bridges*

### 2. – “y” preceded by a consonant

+ “y” changes into “i”

E.g. *city* – *cityis*

*family* – *familyis*

Cf.: *boy* – *boys*

*day* – *days*

*monkey* – *monkeys*

### 3. – “o” preceded by a consonant

E.g. *hero* – *heroes*

*potato* – *potatoes*

*tomato* – *tomatoes*

Cf.: *cuckoo* – *cuckoos*

*zoo* – *zoos*

*studio* – *studios*

*video* – *videos*

*radio* – *radios*

*portfolio* – *portfolios*

But!    *photo – photos*  
           *piano – pianos*  
           *solo – solos*  
           *metro – metros*  
           *zero – zeros*  
           *auto – autos*  
           *kilo – kilos*  
           *tobacco – tobaccos*

Note: There are a few nouns which have both forms:

E.g. cargo <	<i>cargoes</i>	volcano <	<i>volcanoes</i>
	<i>cargos</i>		<i>volcanos</i>

4. – “f”/ – “fe” in the **following** nouns:  
 + “f” changes into “v”

<i>knife – knives</i>	<i>leaf – leaves</i>	<i>calf – calves</i>	<i>thief – thieves</i>
<i>wife – wives</i>	<i>wolf – wolves</i>	<i>shelf – shelves</i>	<i>half – halves</i>
<i>life – lives</i>	<i>self – selves</i>	<i>loaf – loaves</i>	<i>elf – elves</i>

But! Other nouns ending in – “f”/ – “fe” add “s”

E.g. roof – roofs	gulf – gulfs
proof – proofs	cliff – cliffs
belief – beliefs	reef – reefs
relief – reliefs	safe – safes
chief – chiefs	handkerchief – handkerchiefs

Note: There are a few nouns which have both forms

E.g. hoof <	hoofs	scarf <	scarfs	wharf <	wharfs
	<i>hooves</i>		<i>scarves</i>		<i>wharves</i>

#### IV. Plural of Compound Nouns

1. As a rule, they change the singular of the head-word

E.g. *stepmother – stepmothers*  
*passer-by – passers-by*  
*hotel-keeper – hotel-keepers*  
*son-in-law – sons-in-law*  
*editor-in-chief – editors-in-chief*  
*field-mouse – field-mice*

- a) If there is no head-word, the final element takes the plural:  
E.g. *lady-bird – lady-birds*
- b) If there is no noun in the compound, –s/ – es is added to the last element:  
E.g. *forget-me-not – forget-me-nots*  
*merry-go-round – merry-go-rounds*  
*break-down – break-downs*  
*pick-up – pick-ups*  
*go-between – go-betweens*  
*drop-out – drop-outs*  
*sit-in – sit-ins*
2. If the first word of the compound is “man”/”woman”, both the words in the compound are used in the plural:  
E.g. *man-servant – men-servants*  
*woman-doctor – women-doctors*

## V. Irregular Ways of Forming Plural

- 1.
- |                             |                                |                             |                            |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>man – <u>men</u></i>     | <i>child – <u>children</u></i> | <i>foot – <u>feet</u></i>   | <i>mouse – <u>mice</u></i> |
| <i>woman – <u>women</u></i> | <i>ox – <u>oxen</u></i>        | <i>tooth – <u>teeth</u></i> | <i>louse – <u>lice</u></i> |
|                             |                                | <i>goose – <u>geese</u></i> |                            |
2. Some nouns of foreign origin (mostly borrowed from Latin and Greek) keep their native plural forms (they are given in a dictionary).  
E.g. *phenomenon – phenomena* (Greek)  
*crisis – crises* (Greek)  
*formula – formulae* (Latin)

Note: Some of them have 2 plural forms

	<i><u>formulae</u></i>	<i><u>indices</u></i>
E.g. <i>formula</i> <		<i>index</i> <
	<i><u>formulas</u></i>	<i><u>indexes</u></i>

3. In some nouns the plural form does not differ from the singular:

- a) always unchanged:  
*deer – deer*                      *swine – swine*                      *cod – cod*  
*sheep – sheep*                      *grouse – grouse*                      *salmon – salmon*
- b) usually unchanged:  
*trout – trout*                      *carp – carp*  
*pike – pike*                      *moose – moose*
- c) have both regular and unchanged plural:  
*Antelope – antelope(s)*                      *flounder – flounder(s)*  
*reindeer – reindeer(s)*                      *herring – herring(s)*  
*fish – fish(es)*

4. In some nouns the singular form does not differ from the plural:

*means – a means*                      *species – a species*                      *headquarters – a headquarters*  
*series – a series*                      *works – a works*

5. Some nouns ending in **-s(-ics)** are usually singular ( and uncountable).

a) – “s”

<i>news</i>	<i>measles</i>
<i>billiards</i>	<i>mumps</i>
<i>draughts</i>	<i>ricketts</i>
+ <i>some other games</i>	+ <i>some other diseases</i>

b) – “ics”

<i>mathematics (or maths)</i>	<i>athletics</i>
<i>physics</i>	<i>gymnastics</i>
<i>electronics</i>	+ <i>some other</i>
<i>economics</i>	<i>activities</i>
<i>optics</i>	
<i>politics</i>	
<i>phonetics</i>	
+ <i>some other sciences</i>	

c) some geographical names:

countries:	<i>Wales</i>	towns:	<i>Athens</i>
	<i>the Bahamas</i>		<i>Brussels</i>
	<i>the Philippines</i>		<i>Naples</i>
	<i>the Netherlands</i>		
	<i>the United States</i>		

## VI. Nouns With No Singular (=Always Plural)

1. One thing has two parts:

<i>trousers</i>	<i>glasses</i>	<i>pyjamas</i>	<i>scissors</i>	Cf.: <i>a glove - gloves</i>
<i>jeans</i>	<i>spectacles</i>		<i>shears</i>	<i>a sock - socks</i>
<i>tights</i>	<i>goggles</i>	(top and bottom)	<i>tongs</i>	<i>a stocking – stockings</i>
<i>shorts</i>	<i>binoculars</i>			
<i>pants</i>				
<i>breeches</i>	(two eyes)		<i>scales</i>	
<i>leggings</i>				

(two legs)

Note: To make them singular we use “**a pair of**”

E.g. *Those are nice jeans . → That’s a nice pair of jeans.*

2. Some other nouns:

*goods*  
*clothes*  
*wages*  
*sweets*  
*contents*  
*people*

(Note: *a people* = “народ, нация” – *peoples* )

## VII. Nouns With No Plural (=Always Singular)

1. uncountable nouns:

*money* (much money, little money, a little money)  
*advice* (a piece of advice)  
*furniture* (an item of furniture, a piece of furniture)  
*knowledge*  
*information*  
*progress*  
*work* (a piece of work, a job, jobs)  
*experience* (“an experience”, “experiences” when countable in the meaning of “приключение”)  
*hair* (a hair, 2 hairs when countable)  
*weather*

2. nouns of material:

*gold*  
*silver*  
*bread* (a loaf of bread, a slice of bread)  
*sugar* } (but different kinds (sorts) are  
*wine* } called “sugars”, “wines”)  
*tea* } ( but thinking about helpings  
*coffee* } we say: “2 teas”, “4 coffees  
*ice-cream* } and 6 ice-creams”)  
*paper* (“a paper, papers” when countable)

2. abstract nouns:

*strength*      *friendship*      *noise* } ( but “a noise”, “noises”; “a light”,  
*will*            *music*            *light* } “lights” when countable)  
*love*

## VIII. More Things to Remember

1. a) *house* – *houses*  
[haus] – [hauzɪz]

