

Plurals

Plurals are used to say we have more than one of something. The traditional rule to make a noun plural in English is to add the letter S to the end of the word.

EXAMPLES



C A R

If we add the letter S to the end, we have ***cars***.

O R A N G E

If we add the letter S to the end, we have ***oranges***.



EXCEPTIONS

There are many words that don't follow this traditional rule.

- 1) If the last letters in the word are CH, SH, S, X O or Z, then we add ES to the end of the noun instead (***watch* → *watches***).
- 2) There is a special rule for words ending in O. If the final letters are consonant + O, then we add ES to the end of the word (***tomato* → *tomatoes***). If the final letters are vowel + O, then we add only S to the end of the word (***kangaroo* → *kangaroos***.) There are a few exceptions to this rule though; *piano* → *pianos*, *kilo* → *kilos*, *auto* → *autos*, *solo* → *solos*, *soprano* → *sopranos*, *memo* → *memos* and *pro* → *pros*.
- 3) If the last letter in the word is F, then we replace this with a V, then add ES to the end of the noun instead (***leaf* → *leaves***). There are a few exceptions where the F doesn't change to a V in the plural form; *dwarf* → *dwarfs*, *belief* → *beliefs*, *roof* → *roofs*, *safe* → *safes*, *reef* → *reefs*, *chief* → *chiefs*.
- 4) If the last two letters of the word are FE, then we replace this with VE, then add S to the end of the noun instead (***wife* → *wives***).
- 5) If the last two letters of the word are consonant + Y, then we eliminate the Y, replace it with an I, then add ES to the end of the noun instead (***baby* → *babies***). Note that if the final two letters are vowel + Y, this follows the traditional rule where you simply add S (***boy* → *boys***).
- 6) If the last two letters of the word are US, you eliminate the US and replace it with I (***cactus* → *cacti***).
- 7) If the last two letters of the word are UM, you eliminate the UM and replace it with A (***curriculum* → *curricula***).
- 8) If the last two letters of the word are IS, you replace the I with E (***thesis* → *theses***).
- 9) If the last two letters of the word are ON, you replace the ON with A (***phenomenon* → *phenomena***).
- 10) If the last two letters of the word are IX, you eliminate the IX and replace it with CES (***appendix* → *appendices***). If the last two letters of the word are EX, you eliminate the EX and replace it with ICES (***apex* → *apices***).

Most plurals are formed in English by adding S or ES to the end of the word. There are also many specific Latin endings which require a change when forming the plural, but these are strict rules and patterns. Unfortunately, not all of the nouns in English follow these patterns. These are called irregular plurals. We have categorised the irregular plurals into groups to help you learn them.

OO → EE

foot → feet
goose → geese
tooth → teeth

No Change

fish → fish
sheep → sheep
deer → deer
bison → bison
moose → moose
swine → swine
series → series
species → species

EN Ending

child → children
ox → oxen
man → men
woman → women

OUSE → ICE

mouse → mice
louse → lice

French X

beau → beaux
chateau → chateaux
bureau → bureaux

Plurals only

These words only exist in the plural form and always require a plural noun.

Glasses
Shorts
Jeans
Scissors
Pants
Tweezers
Binoculars

Hebrew IM

cherub → cherubim
seraph → seraphim

Two-part plurals

The noun should always become plural and never the adjectives or prepositions.

Son-in-law → sons-in-law
Runner-up → runners-up

Italian O → I

libretto → libretti
tempo → tempi
virtuoso → virtuosi

Completely Irregular

person → people
penny → pence