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A plural noun indicates that there is more than one of that noun (while a singular noun indicates that there is just one of the noun). English has both regular and irregular plural nouns.

Let's start with regular plurals: **regular plural nouns** use established patterns to indicate there is more than one of a thing.

Recognize nouns marked with plural form –s.

We add the plural suffix –s to most words.

- apple → apples
- key → keys
- computer → computers

However, after sounds *s*, *z*, *sh*, *ch*, and *j*, we add the plural suffix –es.

- box → boxes
- wish → wishes
- kiss → kisses

Practice

Do you know how to spell the plurals for the following words?

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
book		peach	
chair		buzz	
picture		watch	

Click to Show Answer

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
book	<i>books</i>	peach	<i>peaches</i>
chair	<i>chairs</i>	buzz	<i>buzzes</i>
picture	<i>pictures</i>	watch	<i>watches</i>

After the letter o.

We add the plural suffix *-es* to most words that end in *o*.

- tomato → tomatoes
- hero → heroes

We add the plural suffix *-s* to words of foreign origin (Latin, Greek, Spanish, etc.)

- piano → pianos
- photo → photos
- video → videos

Note: While you won't be expected to know which words have a foreign origin, being familiar with (or memorizing) some common words that use this plural can be really helpful. And remember, if you're ever in doubt, the dictionary is there for you!

Practice

What are the correct plurals for the following words?

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
solo		portfolio	
veto		memo	
echo		radio	
avocado		zero	
studio		potato	

Click to Show Answer

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
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solo	<i>solos</i>	portfolio	<i>portfolios</i>
veto	<i>veto</i>	memo	<i>memos</i>
echo	<i>echoes</i>	radio	<i>radios</i>
avocado	<i>avocados</i>	zero	<i>zeroes</i>
studio	<i>studios</i>	potato	<i>potatoes</i>

After **-y** and **-f, -fe**

When a word ends in *y* and there is a consonant before *y*, we change the *y* to *i* and add *-es*.

- baby → babies
- fly → flies

But not after a vowel + **y**

- toy → toys
- monkey → monkeys
- day → days

Practice

What are the correct plurals for the following words?

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
supply		key	
fry		play	
ally		boy	

Click to Show Answer

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
supply	<i>supplies</i>	key	<i>keys</i>
fry	<i>fries</i>	play	<i>plays</i>
ally	<i>allies</i>	boy	<i>boys</i>

When a word ends in *-f* or *-fe*, we change the *f* to *v* and add *-es*.

- leaf → leaves
- life → lives
- scarf → scarves
- calf → calves
- loaf → loaves

But not in these words

- cliff → cliffs
- roof → roofs
- belief → beliefs
- chief → chiefs

Practice

What are the correct plurals for the following words?

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
wolf		self	
chief		half	
sheaf		roof	
knife		thief	

Click to Show Answer

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
wolf	<i>wolves</i>	self	<i>selves</i>
chief	<i>chiefs</i>	half	<i>halves</i>
sheaf	<i>sheaves</i>	roof	<i>roofs</i>
knife	<i>knives</i>	thief	<i>thieves</i>

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