

Spelling Rules for Making Plural Nouns

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Normal Nouns

Normal nouns are made plural simply by adding an **s**. Because normal nouns are very numerous, this is a very limited list.

Singular	Plural
artichoke	artichokes
bubble	bubbles
chart	charts
drum	drum
egg	eggs
fringe	fringes
group	groups
hoop	hoops
icicle	icicles
jeep	jeeps
knot	knots
llama	llamas
mop	mops

Singular	Plural
nose	noses
oven	ovens
park	parks
queen	queens
raven	ravens
soup	soups
tree	trees
umbrella	umbrellas
violin	violins
war	wars
xylophone	xylophones
yam	yams
zoo	zoos

Nouns ending in s, x, z, ch, or sh

Nouns that end in **s, x, z, ch, or sh** are made plural by adding **es**. The list below includes only a small sampling.

Singular	Plural
boss	bosses
moss	mosses
kiss	kisses
bus	buses
class	classes
fox	foxes
box	boxes
hex	hexes
ax	axes
buzz	buzzes
fizz	fizzes

Singular	Plural
itch	itches
witch	witches
stitch	stitches
birch	birches
wrench	wrenches
ash	ashes
rash	rashes
dish	dishes
marsh	marshes
rush	rushes
clash	clashes

Nouns ending in y, preceded by a consonant

Nouns that end in **y**, preceded by a consonant, are made plural by replacing the **y** with **ies**.

Singular	Plural
ability	abilities
battery	batteries
candy	candies
city	cities
daisy	daisies
energy	energies
fairy	fairies
gravy	gravies
hobby	hobbies
inability	inabilities
jelly	jellies
kitty	kitties

Singular	Plural
lady	ladies
mommy	mommies
navy	navies
oddy	oddities
puppy	puppies
quantity	quantities
remedy	remedies
story	stories
twenty	twenties
unity	unities
visionary	visionaries
whimsy	whimsies

Nouns ending in y, preceded by a vowel

Nouns that end in **y**, preceded by a vowel, are treated like normal nouns: just add **s**.

Singular	Plural
day	days
play	plays

Singular	Plural
toy	toys
valley	valleys

Nouns ending in o, preceded by a consonant

Some nouns that end in **o**, preceded by a consonant, are made plural by adding **es**.

Singular	Plural
echo	echoes
hero	heroes
potato	potatoes

Singular	Plural
tomato	tomatoes
tomato	tomatoes
zero	zeroes

Other nouns that end in **o** and are preceded by a consonant are made plural by just adding **s**. If in doubt, check a dictionary.

Singular	Plural
casino	casinos
disco	discos
egos	egos
Intro	intros

Singular	Plural
inferno	infernos
photo	photos
promo	promos
ratio	ratios

Still other nouns ending in **o** and preceded by a consonant have both recognized plural forms: add either **s** or **es**. If in doubt, check a dictionary.

Singular	Plural
buffalo	buffalos or buffaloes
halo	halos or haloes
mosquito	mosquitos or mosquitoes

Singular	Plural
gazebo	gazebos or gazeboes
tornado	tornados or tornadoes
embargo	embargos or embargoes

Nouns ending in f or fe

Some nouns that end in **f** or **fe** become plural by changing the **f** or **fe** to **ves**.

Singular	Plural
calf	calves
elf	elves
half	halves
knife	knives

Singular	Plural
leaf	leaves
life	lives
shelf	shelves
wife	wives

Other nouns that end in **f** or **fe** are treated as normal nouns: just add **s**.

Singular	Plural
belief	beliefs
brief	briefs
chef	chefs
chief	chiefs

Singular	Plural
cliff	cliffs
gulf	gulfs
proof	proofs
safe	safes

A small group of nouns that end in **f** can be made plural either way:

Singular	Plural
hoof	hoofs <i>or</i> hooves
dwarf	dwarfs <i>or</i> dwarves
scarf	scarfs <i>or</i> scarves

Singular	Plural
loaf	loafs <i>or</i> loaves
staff	staffs <i>or</i> staves
wharf	wharfs <i>or</i> wharves

Irregular Plurals

Many nouns are just, well, different. There's nothing to do but learn which these are. If in doubt, consult a dictionary.

Some nouns ending in **us** are made plural by changing the **us** to **i**.

Singular	Plural
alumnus	alumni
cactus	cacti
focus	focuses <i>or</i> foci
fungus	funguses <i>or</i> fungi

Singular	Plural
octopus	octopuses <i>or</i> octopi
nucleus	nuclei
radius	radii
stimulus	stimuli

Some nouns ending in **is** are made plural by changing the **is** to **es**.

Singular	Plural
axis	axes
analysis	analyses
basis	bases
crisis	crises
diagnosis	diagnoses
ellipsis	ellipses

Singular	Plural
hypothesis	hypotheses
oasis	oases
paralysis	paralyses
synthesis	syntheses
synopsis	synopses
thesis	theses

Some nouns ending in **ix** or **ex** are made plural by changing the **ix** to **ices**.

Singular	Plural
appendix	appendices
index	indices

Singular	Plural
matrix	matrices
vertex	vertices

Some nouns ending in **eau** are made plural by changing the **eau** to **eaux**.

Singular	Plural
beau	beaux
bureau	bureaus <i>or</i> bureaux

Singular	Plural
chateau	chateaux
tableau	tableaux <i>or</i> tableaux

Some nouns become plural by changing the ending to **en**.

Singular	Plural
child	children
man	men

Singular	Plural
ox	oxen
woman	women

Some nouns become plural by changing the ending to **a**.

Singular	Plural
bacterium	bacteria
corpus	corpora
criterion	criteria
curriculum	curricula
datum	data

Singular	Plural
genus	genera
medium	media
memorandum	memoranda
phenomenon	phenomena
stratum	strata

Some nouns become plural by changing **oo** to **ee**.

Singular	Plural
foot	feet
goose	geese
tooth	teeth

Some nouns become plural by changing the ending **a** to **ae**.

Singular	Plural
antenna	antennae <i>or</i> antennas
formula	formulae <i>or</i> formulas

Singular	Plural
nebula	nebulae <i>or</i> nebulas
vertebra	vertebrae

Some nouns become plural by replacing **ouse** with **ice**.

Singular	Plural
louse	lice
mouse	mice

Some nouns don't change at all between singular and plural forms.

Singular	Plural
aircraft	aircraft
deer	deer
means	means
moose	moose

Singular	Plural
offspring	offspring
series	series
sheep	sheep
species	species

Some nouns only have a plural form.

Plural	
dregs	pliers
grits	scissors
mumps	shorts
news	victuals

Some nouns have only a singular form in ordinary usage (some of these, like money, cotton, and sugar can be plural when talking about particular kinds)

Singular	
coffee	money
corn	silver
cotton	sugar
gold	wheat

Some nouns naming animals have two plural forms.

Singular	Plural
antelope	antelope <i>or</i> antelopes
cod	cod <i>or</i> cods
elk	elk <i>or</i> elks
fish	fish <i>or</i> fishes
flounder	flounder <i>or</i> flounders
grouse	grouse <i>or</i> grouses

Singular	Plural
herring	herring <i>or</i> herrings
quail	quail <i>or</i> quails
reindeer	reindeer <i>or</i> reindeers
salmon	salmon <i>or</i> salmon
shrimp	shrimp <i>or</i> shrimps
trout	trout <i>or</i> trouts

Compound nouns are usually made plural by making the first noun part plural.

Singular	Plural
attorney-general	attorneys-general
brother-in-law	brothers-in-law
father-in-law	fathers-in-law

Singular	Plural
mother-in-law	mothers-in-law
run batted in	runs batted in
sister-in-law	sisters-in-law

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