

Singular and Plural Nouns – 13 Rules

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Nouns are one of the **parts of speech** in the English language. One thing that is important while mentioning nouns in any sentence is the difference between singularity and plurality of the noun. There are some important yet simple rules to follow while writing Singular and Plural Nouns, and we shall discuss all those rules in this article.

Singular and Plural Nouns

Singular nouns are the nouns that indicate one person, one thing, one place, or any noun. Plural nouns are the nouns that denote more than one person, place, thing, or any other noun. It is easy to differentiate between singular and plural nouns, and if we remember some basic rules, it is easy to convert a singular noun to plural.

Rules for Changing Singular Nouns into Plural Nouns

Rule 1

If the singular name of the noun ends with *s, ss, sh, ch, x, or z*, then an 'es' has to be put at the end of the noun to make it plural. Let us see some nouns that fall under this rule.

- Class → Classes
- Kiss → Kisses
- Bench → Benches
- Mass → Masses
- Tax → Taxes
- Watch → Watches
- Match → Matches
- Bush → Bushes
- Topaz → Topazes
- Box → Boxes

An exception for this rule is *Monarch* and *Stomach*, whose plural nouns are *Monarchs* and *Stomachs*.

Rule 2

If the noun ends with 'O', the plural of the noun has 'es' at the end of it.

- Hero → Heroes
- Zero → Zeroes
- Potato → Potatoes
- Mango → Mangoes
- Echo → Echoes
- Buffalo → Buffaloes
- Tornado → Tornadoes
- Mosquito → Mosquitoes

Some exceptions of this rule are as follows:

- Photo → Photos
- Dynamo → Dynamos
- Stereo → Stereos
- Solo → Solos
- Piano → Pianos
- Macho → Machos

Rule 3

If there are two vowels (*a, e, i, o, u*) at the end of the noun, the plural form has 's' in it at the end.

- Radio → Radios
- Ratio → Ratios
- Studio → Studios
- Canoe → Canoes
- bamboo → Bamboos
- Portfolio → Portfolios

Rule 4

If the noun ends with 'y' and is preceded by a consonant, then '**ies**' is added to the noun in plural form. If the noun ends with 'y' and is preceded by a vowel, then '**s**' is added to the noun in plural form. Let's see the examples for easy understanding.

Nouns ending with 'y' and a consonant before it.

- Spy → Spies
- History → Histories

- Fly → Flies
 - Army → Armies
 - City → Cities
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Nouns ending with 'y' and a vowel before it.

- Lay → Lays
- Ray → Rays
- Tray → Trays
- Storey → Storeys
- Day → Days
- Play → Plays

Rule 5

If a noun ends with 'f' or 'fe', then the plural form of the noun ends with 'ves' instead of 'f' or 'fe'. For example,

- Knife → Knives
- Wife → Wives
- Shelf → Shelves
- Loaf → Loaves
- Self → Selves
- Life → Lives

Some exceptions to this rule are:

- Proof → Proofs
- Belief → Beliefs
- Strife → Strifes
- Dwarf → Dwarfs
- Roof → Roofs

Rule 6:

Some nouns convert into a plural by changing the vowels inside the singular form. Some examples are as follows:

Source: <https://edifyenglish.com/singular-and-plural-nouns-13-rules/>

- Man ---> Men
- Woman ---> Women
- Tooth ---> Teeth
- Foot ---> Feet
- Louse ---> Lice
- Mouse ---> Mice

Rule 7

We can change Some nouns into plural by adding 'en' to the plural form. For example,

- Ox ---> Oxen
- Child ---> Children

Rule 8:

Nouns with same Singular and Plural Forms

Some nouns have the same singular and plural forms. Then how do we distinguish between singular and plural? Singular nouns have 'is/ was/ has' as the helping verb, and the plural nouns have 'are/ have/ were/ are' as the helping verb. Let us see some examples.

- Deer ---> Deer
- Gross ---> Gross
- Sheep ---> Sheep
- Pair ---> Pair
- Salmon ---> Salmon
- Score ---> Score

Rule 9:

Nouns that are always in the Plural form

Some nouns can be written only in the plural form and should use a plural verb after the noun. Some of the examples are:

- Spectacles
- Scissors
- Trousers
- Tongs
- Pincers
- Thanks
- Proceeds

Source: <https://edifyenglish.com/singular-and-plural-nouns-13-rules/>

- Nuptials
- Odds
- Vegetables
- Drawers
- Troops, etc.

Rule 10:

Singular Nouns with Plural Forms

Some singular nouns have plural forms but we should write them with singular verb after them. For example,

- Innings
- Mathematics
- News
- Civics
- Rickets
- Measles
- Mumps
- Tuberculosis
- Economics
- Politics
- Physics
- Ethics
- Singles
- Billiards, etc.

Rule 11:

Compound Nouns and their Plural forms

For compound nouns, we can change them into plural forms by adding 's' to the main noun. Here are some examples:

- Father- in- law → Fathers- in- law
- Brother- in- law → Brothers- in- law
- Stepdaughter → Stepdaughters
- Looker- on → Lookers- on
- Man- of- war → Men- of- war
- Commander- in- chief → Commanders- in- chief

Rule 12:

Nouns Borrowed from other Languages and their Plural Forms

Source: <https://edifyenglish.com/singular-and-plural-nouns-13-rules/>

Some nouns borrowed from other languages have some special rules to change into plural forms. Here are some examples.

- Datum --> Data
- Referendum --> Referenda
- Agendum --> Agenda
- Memorandum --> Memoranda
- Oasis --> Oases
- Thesis --> Theses
- Analysis --> Analyses
- Index --> Indices
- Criterion --> Criteria
- Medium --> Media
- Phenomenon --> Phenomena
- Bacterium --> Bacteria

Rule 13

Abstract nouns have no plural form. For example,

- Kindness
- Happiness
- Hope
- Love
- Hatred
- Charity
- Lust
- Compassion, etc.

If some abstract nouns are used in the plural form such as provocations, coppers, irons, etc... they will be classified into **common nouns** and material nouns.

These are the important rules for singular and plural nouns.