

2 Nouns Number



Look at the following table.

A	B
<i>The teacher corrected the paper.</i>	<i>The teachers corrected the papers.</i>
<i>The buffalo grazed in the field.</i>	<i>The buffaloes grazed in the fields.</i>
<i>The guest congratulated the chef.</i>	<i>The guests congratulated the chefs.</i>

In column A, the words in red refer to a single person, place, animal or object. Such nouns are said to be in **singular form**. In column B, the words in red refer to more than one person, place, animal or object. Such nouns are said to be in **plural form**.

A noun is **singular** when it indicates only one person, place, animal or object. A noun is **plural** when it indicates more than one person, place, animal or object.

Examples:

Singular	Plural
<i>This house has a beautiful balcony.</i>	<i>These houses have beautiful balconies.</i>
<i>Amit saw a spider on his notebook.</i>	<i>Amit saw two spiders on his notebooks.</i>
<i>The girl completed her project.</i>	<i>The girls completed their projects.</i>

1. Underline the singular nouns and circle the plural nouns in the following sentences.

- The children have gone to the museum with their parents.
- Labonel is one of the best bakeries in town.
- The library is full of interesting books and journals.
- Kanishk has a box full of chocolates and candies.
- Can you lend me your car for three hours?



- (f) There is an apple and two pomegranates in the basket.
- (g) Some of the students had their answer sheets on their desks.
- (h) The king was surrounded by ten soldiers, yet a man shot him with an arrow.

Now, let us look at the following sentences.

The *boys* climbed the *trees* to pluck *oranges*.

The *cows* gave birth to three *calves*.

The *ladies* entered the hall before us.

In the sentences above, the plural nouns *boys*, *trees*, *oranges* and *cows* are formed by adding -s to the singular forms *boy*, *tree*, *orange* and *cow*, respectively. *Calves* is formed by replacing f in *calf* with -ves. Similarly, *ladies* is formed by replacing y with -ies in the word *lady*. Such plural forms of nouns are called **regular plurals**.

Plural nouns that are formed by following certain rules are called **regular plurals**.

Examples:

The *classrooms* have new *benches* and *whiteboards* now.

Nisha bought fresh *potatoes* and *cherries* from the local *shops*.

Arrange the *knives*, *forks* and *spoons* near the *plates* on the *tables*.

Let's learn some rules of forming regular plurals.

- For most nouns, the plural is formed by adding -s at the end of the singular form, such as *king* - *kings*, *tree* - *trees* and *door* - *doors*.
- For nouns that end with o, s, ss, x, ch or sh, the plural is formed by adding -es at the end of the singular form. For example, *potato* - *potatoes*, *lens* - *lenses*, *dress* - *dresses*, *tax* - *taxes*, *watch* - *watches*, *wish* - *wishes*, etc. However, there are several exceptions to this rule such as *photo* - *photos*, *piano* - *pianos* and *stomach* - *stomachs*.
- For nouns that end with ie, oo or eo, the plural is formed by adding -s at the end of the singular form. For example, *tie* - *ties*, *zoo* - *zoos*, *video* - *videos*, etc.
- For nouns that end with a consonant + y, the plural is formed by replacing y with -ies. For example, *story* - *stories*, *city* - *cities*, etc.
- For nouns that end with a vowel + y, the plural is formed by adding -s at the end of the singular form. For example, *essay* - *essays*, *monkey* - *monkeys*, *trolley* - *trolleys*, etc.
- For nouns that end with f or fe, the plural is formed by replacing f or fe with -ves. For example, *calf* - *calves*, *leaf* - *leaves*, *knife* - *knives*, etc.

There are some exceptions to this rule as well. Some nouns that end with f do not take -ves in their plural forms. For example, *chief* - *chiefs*, *belief* - *beliefs*, etc. Some nouns that end with f take both -ves and -s to form plurals. For example, *scarf* - *scarves/scarfs*, *hoof* - *hooves/hoofs*, *dwarf* - *dwarves/dwarfs*, etc.

2. Fill in the blanks with the correct plural form from brackets.

- (a) There are seven zeros (zeros/zeroes) in a crore.
- (b) The carpenter made two new shelves (shelves/shelves) to keep the books (books/books).
- (c) There are several studios (studios/studios) in the area to get your photos (photos/photos) clicked.
- (d) Kavya got stung by bees (bees/bees) and wasps (wasps/wasps).
- (e) The babies (babies/babies) were excited to see the cuckoos (cuckoos/cuckoos) in the zoo.
- (f) Shut the doors (doors/doors), or the monkeys (monkeys/monkeys) will enter the house.
- (g) The two pianos (pianos/pianos) weigh more than a hundred kilos (kilos/kilos).
- (h) All the renowned chefs (chefs/chefs) advise using different knives (knives/knives) to cut different vegetables (vegetables/vegetables).

Now, look at the following sentences.

The *mice* ate the cake at night.

The *children* wanted to have ice cream.

Seven *women* got injured in the accident.

In these sentences, the words *mice*, *children* and *women* are the plural forms of *mouse*, *child* and *woman*, respectively. These words do not follow a specific rule while changing to their plural forms. Such plural forms are called **irregular plurals**.

The plural nouns that are formed without following any rule are called **irregular plurals**.

Examples:

We should brush our *teeth* twice a day.

Wash your *feet* before you enter the room.

The villagers used *oxen* to pull carts.