

2 Nouns Number



Look at the following table.

A	B
The <i>teacher</i> corrected the <i>paper</i> .	The <i>teachers</i> corrected the <i>papers</i> .
The <i>buffalo</i> grazed in the <i>field</i> .	The <i>buffaloes</i> grazed in the <i>fields</i> .
The <i>guest</i> congratulated the <i>chef</i> .	The <i>guests</i> congratulated the <i>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
This <i>house</i> has a beautiful <i>balcony</i> .	These <i>houses</i> have beautiful <i>balconies</i> .
Amit saw a <i>spider</i> on his <i>notebook</i> .	Amit saw two <i>spiders</i> on his <i>notebooks</i> .
The <i>girl</i> completed her <i>project</i> .	The <i>girls</i> completed their <i>projects</i> .

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



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