

When -s or -es Occur

CK-12 English

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Forming Plurals Using -s or -es

Singular nouns that take -s or -es to form plurals

When -s or -es Occur



[Figure1]

Words that end in the sounds [s], [z], [sh], and [ch] all take -es instead of -s to make them plural.

This distinction is understandable since these sounds are all hissing, or sibilant sounds, making it difficult to distinguish between the singular and plural versions when spoken if only an [s] sound is added.

For instance, the plural of *box* would be *boxs, [bokss], which would quickly simplify to [boks], and the plural of *guess* would be *guesss. Both of these make the spoken singular and plural forms indistinguishable, and *guesss* violates the constraint against triplet letters in English. So, -es, pronounced [iz], is used in place of -s, making the distinction between the spoken singulars and plurals quite clear: [boks] vs. ['bok.siz] and [ges] vs. ['ges.iz].

Examples

Below are some examples of singular nouns that end with the sounds [s], [z], [sh], or [ch]. Note how these nouns take -es.

1. mess + es = messes
2. witch + es = witches
3. frizz + es = frizzes
4. hush + es = hushes
5. mouse + es = mice

Note that, to be consistent, you can think of this last example as still adding -es, but then deleting the final <e>.

Review

1. Review the following groups of singular nouns:

Singular nouns that take . . .

-es	-s
house	father
box	phone
bus	finger
dance	
catch	
guess	
place	
speech	
pitch	
waltz	
surprise	
inch	

[Figure2]

Sort these twelve singular nouns into this matrix. Remember that the letter <x> at the end of words spells the combination of sounds [ks]. When you are finished, two of the squares should still be empty:

Singular nouns that . . .		
	end with the sounds [s], [z], [sh], or [ch]:	do not end with [s], [z], [sh], or [ch]:
Nouns that take -s:		
Nouns that take -es:		

[Figure3]

2. When you want to refer to more than one of something with a singular noun that ends in the sounds _____, _____, _____, or _____, you add -es.

3. Now you can write a more useful rule for choosing -s and -es: When you want to refer to more than one of something with a noun that ends in the sounds _____, _____, _____, or _____, you add -es, but with most other nouns you add _____.

Review (Answers)

1.

Singular Nouns that...

End with the Sounds [s], [z], [sh], or [ch]:	Do Not End with [s], [z], [sh], or [ch]:
Nouns that Take -s:	<i>finger</i>
	<i>father</i>
	<i>phone</i>
Nouns that Take -es:	
<i>house</i>	
<i>speech</i>	
<i>box</i>	
<i>pitch</i>	
<i>brush</i>	
<i>waltz</i>	
<i>dance</i>	
<i>surprise</i>	
<i>catch</i>	
<i>inch</i>	
<i>guess</i>	
<i>place</i>	

2. When you want to refer to more than one of something with a singular noun that ends in the sounds [s], [z], [sh], or [ch], you add -es.

3. Now you can write a more useful rule for choosing -s and -es: When you want to refer to more than one of something with a noun that ends in the sounds [s], [z], [sh], or [ch], you add -es, but with most other nouns you add s.

Explore More

Word Changes

1. Write the word *catch* in the blank: ... _____

2. Add the suffix that means “more than one”: ... _____
3. Change the <s> to the letter that comes right in front of it in the alphabet: ...

4. Change the first letter of the word to <w> and change the last letter to <s>: ...

5. Change the first vowel in the word to <l>: ... _____
6. Change the first letter in the word to the letter that comes between <o> and <q> in the alphabet and change the <s> back to <r>: ... _____
7. Add the suffix that means “more than one”: ... _____
8. Take away the <p> and the <t>. Then move the <r> up to the front of the word: ...

9. Change the last letter of the word back to an <r>: ... _____

Riddle: A baseball player who makes a lot of money might be called a

Word #9 Word #6 .

Explore More (Answers)

1. Write the word *catch* in the blank:..... *catch*
2. Add the suffix that means “more than one”:..... *catches*
3. Change the <s> to the letter that comes right in front of it in the alphabet:..... *catcher*
4. Change the first letter of the word to <w> and change the last letter to <s>:.....
watches
5. Change the first vowel in the word to <l>:..... *witches*
6. Change the first letter in the word to the letter that comes between <o> and <q> in the alphabet and change the <s> back to <r>:..... *pitcher*
7. Add the suffix that means “more than one”:..... *pitchers*
8. Take away the <p> and the <t>. Then move the <r> up to the front of the word:.....
riches
9. Change the last letter of the word back to an <r>:..... *richer*

Riddle: A baseball player who makes a lot of money might be called a

richer *pitcher*
Word#9 Word#6 .

1.0 REFERENCES

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