

# The Nouns: Number

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Look at the pictures and read the sentences:



A **boy** runs after a **dog** with a **stick**.

**Boys** run after **dogs** with **sticks**.



## Notes:

1. The nouns **boy**, **dog** and **stick** stand for only one person, animal or thing. A noun standing for one person, animal or thing is said to be in the **Singular Number**.
2. The nouns **boys**, **dogs** and **sticks** stand for more than one person, animal or thing. A noun standing for more than one person, animal or thing is said to be in the **Plural Number**.

## How to form plural nouns

1. Singular nouns generally make their plural by adding '**s**'.

Examples:	balloon	balloons	doll	dolls
	kite	kites	shoe	shoes

2. Some nouns ending in a hissing sound, (i.e. ending in **s**, **ss**, **sh**, **ch** or **x**) add '**es**'.

Examples:	batch	batches	class	classes
	match	matches	bus	buses
	bush	bushes	box	boxes

3. Some nouns ending in 'o', 'oo', 'eo' or 'io' add 's' only.

Examples: (a) photo      photos      studio      studios

But some other nouns ending in 'o' add 'es'.

(b) buffalo      buffaloes      mango      mangoes  
potato      potatoes

4. Some nouns ending in 'f' or 'ef' or 'fe' change to 'ves'.

Examples: loaf      loaves      shelf      shelves  
thief      thieves      knife      knives

But some other nouns (ending in 'f') add 's' only.

Examples: dwarf      dwarfs      proof      proofs  
roof      roofs

5. Some nouns ending in 'y' but having consonants before 'y' change to 'ies'.

Examples: baby      babies      fairy      fairies  
lady      ladies      story      stories

But some other nouns ending in 'y' having vowels before 'y' add 's' only.

Examples: boy      boys      donkey      donkeys  
monkey      monkeys

6. Some plural forms of nouns are totally different from their singular forms.

Examples: child      children      woman      women  
mouse      mice      ox      oxen



**Remember**

one – singular  
many – plural

*Exceptions:*

(a) A few nouns like **deer**, **sheep** and **fish** are the same in the plural as in the singular. Some writers use the word 'fishes' when they want to indicate different kinds of fish.

Example: Four kinds of **fishes** are swimming in the pond.

(b) Some nouns like **accommodation**, **scenery**, **advice**, **information**, **news**, **furniture**, **luggage**, **machinery**, **physics**, **mathematics** and **politics** have no plurals.

- (c) Some nouns are always used in the plural. They are not used in the singular.

1. Names of certain articles of dress: trousers, pants, drawers, shorts.  
(It may be noted that the lower portion of some of these dress articles is divided into two parts.)

2. Names of certain tools or articles: scissors, shears, spectacles.

- (d) Abstract nouns, material nouns and proper nouns have no plural forms.

- (e) Compound nouns generally form their plurals by adding 's' to the principal words.

passer-by

passers-by

son-in-law

sons-in-law

commander-in-chief

commanders-in-chief

- (f) Some compound nouns form double plurals:

man-servant

men-servants

woman-servant

women-servants



**Remember**

No change in spelling in singular or plural for some words e.g. scissors, furniture

## Countable and Uncountable Nouns

We can count the persons, as one person, two persons, three persons and so on. We can count the animals as one cat, two cats, three cats and so on. We can count various kinds of things, as one pen, two pens, three pens and so on. We, however, cannot count water and say one water or two waters, but we can count one glass of water or two glasses of water. We cannot say: "Give me one tea" or "two teas", but we can say: "Give me one cup of tea" or "two cups of tea".

Thus, the nouns that we can count are called **Countable Nouns**. The nouns that we cannot count are called **Uncountable Nouns**, and these nouns cannot be used in plural form. We can say:

1. Two loaves of bread (not 'Two breads').
2. Three packets of butter (not 'Three butters').



3. Four bags of wheat (not 'Four wheats').

4. Five balls of wool (not 'Five wools').

## EXERCISES



Fill in the blanks with the plural forms of the words in colour.

1. We say one **card**, but a pack of cards ..
2. We say one **child**, but a number of children ..
3. We say one **fish**, but a shoal of fish ..
4. We say one **glove**, but a pair of gloves ..
5. We say one **house**, but a group of houses ..
6. We say one **key**, but a bunch of keys ..
7. We say one **ox**, but many oxen ..
8. We say one **road**, but several roads ..
9. We say one **shoe**, but a pair of shoes ..
10. We say one **tooth**, but a set of teeth ..



Choose the right words from the brackets.

1. A pack of (**wolf**, wolves) attacked the sick horse.
2. Put these (**book**, books) on those (**shelf**, shelves).
3. The (**goose**, geese) have webbed (**foot**, feet).
4. How many (**prize**, prizes) have you won?
5. He had to hire several (**pony**, ponies) on that (**journey**, journeys).
6. How many (**toe**, toes) have you on each (**foot**, feet)?
7. Which (**locality**, localities) is full of (**fly**, flies)?

8. I need a pair of (~~scissor~~, ~~scissors~~) to cut this (~~cloth~~, clothes).
9. Many a (~~plate~~, plates) is broken.
10. A number of (~~camel~~, ~~camels~~) have broken (tooth, teeth).

In the following sentences, change the nouns in colour into their plural forms and rewrite the sentences. Make other necessary changes, wherever needed:

1. Keep your **knife**, **fork** and **spoon** ready for use.  
Keep your knives, forks and spoons ready for use.
2. The **tiger** has eaten up the **sheep**.  
The tigers have eaten up the sheep.
3. Can you shoot that **deer** on the **hill-side**?  
Can you shoot these deer on the hills-side?
4. A **cow** is standing under the **cowshed**.  
The cows are standing under the cowsheds.
5. The **leaf** fell from the **tree**.  
The leaves fell from the trees.
6. The **nurse** looks after the **baby**.  
The nurses look after the babies.
7. A **hen** has laid an **egg** under the **box**.  
The hens have laid eggs under the boxes.
8. What **reply** have you received from your **uncle**?  
What replies have you received from your uncles?
9. This **boy** along with that **child** plays with a **toy**.  
These boys along with those children play with a toys.
10. This **mouse** is too clever to get into that **trap**.  
These mice are too clever to get into those traps.





Change the nouns in the singular form. Make other changes as needed.

1. Babies suck their toes.

Baby sucks his/her toe.

2. Wolves kill sheep.

Wolf kills sheep.

3. Rabbits eat up cabbages.

Rabbit eats up cabbage.

4. Two dozen mangoes are needed for these functions.

A dozen mango is needed for this function.

5. Children fly kites.

Child flies kite.

6. We can't see without our spectacles.

I can't see without my spectacles.

7. Those women and children have bad teeth.

This woman and child have bad tooth.

8. His eyes are as brown as berries.

His eye is as brown as a berry.

9. After crossing valleys and hills the rivers reach the plains.

After crossing a valley and a hill the river reaches the

10. They often pluck fruits from the branches of trees.

He often plucks fruit from the branch of a tree.





Fill in 'is' or 'are' in the blanks.

1. That furniture ..... *is* ..... of poor quality.
2. There ..... *are* ..... no good news for you.
3. Your luggage ..... *is* ..... lying outside.
4. These scissors ..... *are* ..... not very sharp.
5. The advice that you gave me ..... *is* ..... good.
6. Rohan's trousers ..... *are* ..... torn.
7. Her clothes ..... *are* ..... always very smart.
8. A sheep's feet ..... *are* ..... not bent.
9. The sun's rays ..... *are* ..... coming through the window.
10. Where ..... *is* ..... my bunch of keys?