

# THE ACADEMIC SUCCESS CENTER

at **Sam Houston**  
STATE UNIVERSITY

## Singular and Plural Nouns

Nouns can be either **singular** or **plural**. They are singular if they stand for only one thing. They are plural if they stand for more than one thing.

### How to make nouns plural

Most nouns can be made plural by adding **-s** or **-es** to the end of the word.

Singular	Plural
dog	dogs
chair	chairs
class	classes
lunch	lunches
horse	horses

Many nouns that end in **-y** are made plural by replacing the **-y** with **-ies**.

Singular	Plural
baby	babies
story	stories
lady	ladies

**BUT**—If there is a vowel before the **-y**, then it is made plural the regular way, by adding **-s** to the end of the word.

Singular	Plural
key	keys
boy	boys
toy	toys

English has some nouns that are made plural in an unusual way, such as these:

Singular	Plural
man	men
woman	women
child	children
mouse	mice
foot	feet

If you are not sure how to make a noun plural, you can find out by using a dictionary.

Information on this handout adapted from:  
*English Grammar Drills* by Mark Lester

Some nouns are always written the same way whether they are singular or plural. Here are a few:

**Singular**

fish  
sheep

**Plural**

fish  
sheep

A noun is **noncount** if it cannot be counted. Here are some noncount nouns:

rice  
electricity  
homework

Noncount nouns are always singular. Since they cannot be counted, it would be incorrect to make them plural or talk about them with number words.

~~X~~ rices  
~~X~~ two electricities  
~~X~~ three homeworks

A **collective noun** is a word that names a class or a group. In American English, collective nouns are nearly always treated as singular — they emphasize the group as a single unit.

jury  
audience  
family