Plural Noun Forms

Regular Plurals

1.- The plural form of most nouns is created simply by adding the letter 's' to the end of the word.

minute - minutes | horse - horses | bag - bags

2.- Nouns that end in -ch, -x, -s, -sh or s-like sounds, the plural is formed by adding 'es' to the end of the word.

church - churches | box - boxes | gas - gases | bush - bushes | ass - asses

3.- Nouns that end in a single -z, the plural is formed by adding 'zes' to the end of the word.

quiz - quizzes

4.- Most nouns ending in -o preceded by a consonant also form their plurals by adding 'es'.

potato - potatoes | tomato - tomatoes | volcano - volcanoes

5.- However many newly created words and words with a Spanish or Italian origin that end in -o just add an 's'.

photo - photos | piano - pianos | portico - porticos

6.- Nouns ending in a consonant + y, drop the y and add 'ies'.

party - parties | lady - ladies

7.- Most nouns ending in -f or -fe, drop the f and add 'ves'.

calf - calves | half - halves | wolf - wolves

8.- Most words ending in -is, drop the -is and add -es.

crisis - crises | hypothesis - hypotheses | oasis - oases

Irregular Plurals

Many common nouns connected with human beings seem to be irregular.

child - children | person - people | man - men | woman - women

Other irregular common nouns are: foot - feet | mouse - mice | tooth - teeth | louse-lice
Some nouns have identical plural and singular form:

- aircraft - aircraft
- fish - fish
- headquarters - headquarters
- sheep - sheep
- species - species

Uncountable nouns on the other hand have no plural form and take a singular verb (is / was ...).

- advice
- information
- luggage
- news

Some nouns (especially those associated with two things) exist only in the plural form and take a plural verb (are / were...)

- cattle
- scissors
- trousers
- congratulations
- pyjamas

Nouns that stem from older forms of English or are of foreign origin often have odd plurals.

- ox - oxen
- index - indices or indexes

Words ending in -us

Linguists can argue for hours about the plural ending of nouns ending in -us. Many of these words are loanwords from Latin and preserve their Latin plural form, replacing the -us suffix with -i, but of course not all words ending in -us have a Latin origin, and some Latin words ending in -us were not pluralized with -i. Hence the argument.

The English plural of *virus* is *viruses*, not *viri*.

Other Latin loanwords that take the regular English plural -es ending include

- campus - campuses
- bonus - bonuses

Latin loanwords that take a -i plural ending include

- radius - radii
- alumnus - alumni

Note - Some nouns just create controversy. Did you know that the proper plural spelling for *roof* is *rooves* and not the more common *roofs*?