Rules for Forming Plural Nouns

To form the plural of nouns, follow the rules below.

1. Add s to most nouns.
   
girl/girls   bicycle/bicycles   printer/printers

2. Add es to nouns ending in s, x, z, ch, or sh.
   
class/classes   ax/axes buzz/buzzes   church/churches wish/wishes

3. For nouns ending in y preceded by a consonant, change y to i and add es.
   
fly/flies   party/parties   daisy/daisies

4. For nouns ending in y preceded by a vowel, add s.
   
monkey/monkeys   valley/valleys

5. For nouns ending in o preceded by a consonant, add es.
   
hero/heroes   potato/potatoes

6. For nouns ending in o preceded by a vowel, add s.
   
Oreo/Oreos   radio/radios   patio/patios

7. For musical terms ending in o, add s.
   
solo/solos   alto/altos   piano/pianos

8. For nouns ending in f or fe, usually change the f or fe to ves.
   
leaf/leaves   shelf/shelves   wolf/wolves

Exceptions: chief/chiefs chef/chefs safe/safes

9. Add s to the end of singular nouns ending in ful.
   
cupful/cupfuls   spoonful/spoonfuls
10. Change the spelling of some words.

  cactus/cacti  mouse/mice  goose/geese  woman/women

11. Leave some nouns as they are.

  sheep/sheep  deer/deer  fish/fish  moose/moose

12. Add s to the most important noun in a hyphenated word.

  editor-in-chief/editors-in-chief  brother-in-law/brothers-in-law

13. Add s to proper nouns which do not end in s. Add es to proper nouns which do end in s.

  Mr. and Mrs. Walker/the Walkers  Mr. and Mrs. Ross/the Rosses

This handout is adapted from University of Alabama Writing Center Website. Only the format has been changed.