

The Wug Test – Nouns: How it Works

If you have a **voiceless** sound at the end of a noun, you get the **voiceless plural ending (-s)**. If you have a **voiced** sound at the end of a noun, you get a **voiced plural ending (-z)**. The plural ending always matches the last consonant in the noun in voicing. Regardless of the fact that we spell *dogs*, for example, with an -s, **g** is voiced so we say *dogs* with a -z at the end because **z** is also voiced whereas **s** is voiceless.

What about if a word ends in a vowel? Since all vowels are voiced, all nouns that end in a vowel get a -z plural ending.

What about the **-iz** (spelled -es) plural ending? Whenever a noun ends in a hissing sound that would be difficult to say before an -s or a -z, a vowel is inserted to make the word easier to say. This happens with words that end in -s, -z, -sh, -ch, or -dge (e.g., *horses*, *bushes*, etc.) These hissing sounds are called sibilants.

Word Final Sounds and Their Plural Endings		
Voiceless (add -s)	Voiced (add -z)	Sibilants (add -iz)
p (sheeps)	b (jobs)	s (races)
k (clocks)	d (words)	z (prizes)
t (cats)	g (dogs)	ch (watches)
f (cliffs)	l (walls)	sh (wishes)
gh (laughs)	m (dreams)	dge (judges)
ph (graphs)	n (screens)	
etc.	ng (rings)	
	r (pears)	
	v (gloves)	
	a(plays)	
	e (trees)	
	i (fries)	
	o (toes)	
	u (tissues)	
	etc.	