Plurals

Academic plurals, compound nouns and agreement

Academic plurals

Analysis / analyses; crisis / crises; thesis / theses; criterion / criteria; phenomenon / phenomena. Learn the plural form and its pronunciation together. A final -S alone is not a reliable guide.

Compound nouns

Mother-in-law / mothers-in-law; passer-by / passers-by. The main noun usually carries the plural ending. Check less familiar compounds because their patterns can differ.

Agreement beyond endings

The news is…; mathematics is…; these species are…. A species is singular; two species are plural although the noun form is unchanged. SCISSORS normally takes plural agreement.

Variants and register

Appendixes and appendices are both accepted. Indexes and indices vary partly by field. This pack uses DATA as plural in formal scientific examples; singular mass-noun usage is also common in general English.

Study the pattern, then the meaning

Compare the examples. Identify the rule and explain why it fits the situation. Create a new example of your own, then check that its meaning and grammatical form agree.