

Pronunciation of the final -s

Regular plural of nouns, and the third person singular (he, she, it) of the present tense, are formed with "s". Their pronunciation depends on the sound at the end of the word.

Compare the final "s" in these words.

cats	reads	horses
[kæts]	[ri:dz]	[hɔ:s-ɪz]

1. The final –s after voiceless consonants: t, p, k, f, th /θ/ is pronounced /s/

/t/	/p/	/k/	/f/	/θ/
seats	trips	books	beliefs	months
[si:ts]	[trɪps]	[bʊks]	[br'li:fs]	[mʌn θs]

2. The final –s after voiced consonants -d, -b, -g, -m, -n, -r, -v,-l, -th (ð) and vowels is pronounced /z/

/d/	/b/	/g/	/m/	/r/	vowels	/v/	/l/	/ð/	/n/
seeds	robs	bags	dreams	wears	sees	lives	steals	breathes	trains
[si:dz]	[robz]	[bægz]	[dri:mz]	[weəz]	[si:z]	[lɪvz]	[sti:lz]	[bri:ðz]	[treɪnz]

3. The final –s after -sh, -ch, -s, -z, -ge/dge is pronounced /ɪz/

/ʃ/	/tʃ/	/s/	/z/	/eks/	/ɜ/, /dʒ/
dishes	catches	kisses	prizes	mixes	edges
[dɪʃ-ɪz]	[kætʃ-ɪz]	[kɪs-ɪz]	[praɪz-ɪz]	[mɪks-ɪz]	[edʒ-ɪz]

Exercise 01: classify these words according to the pronunciation of their final -s-

word	/s/	/z/	/ɪz/
begins			
books			
boxes			
cuffs			
eats			
fridges			
hills			
knows			
leaves			
paths			
quizzes			
shops			
teaches			
wars			

word	/s/	/z/	/ɪz/
bridges			
catches			
deals			
dreams			
ends			
fixes			
houses			
legs			
loathes			
makes			
passes			
says			
sites			
trees			

Exercise 02: put the sentences below in the interrogative form

- a. The sun's rays take eight minutes to reach the Earth.

- b. She thinks that it is a good idea.

- c. The store closes at 9 p.m.

- d. Julie drinks tea very often.

- e. Nurses look after patients in hospitals.

- f. Robert usually goes away two or three times a year.

- g. The Olympic Games take place every four years.

Exercise 03: use the following words to complete the sentences. Make the necessary changes

flow	live	grow	translate	cause	tell	open	eat	make	come
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- a. Rice _____ in Britain.
- b. Vegetarians _____ meat.
- c. Mary _____ from Canada.
- d. An interpreter _____ from one language into another.
- e. The Amazon River _____ into the Atlantic Ocean.
- f. Liars are people who _____ the truth.
- g. Bees _____ honey.
- h. My parents _____ in a very small flat.
- i. The swimming pool _____ at 07:30 every morning.
- j. Bad driving _____ many accidents.

