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Irregular Plurals - Year 5

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Irregular Plurals: Four Useful Families

1

Complete changes



person → people
child → children
mouse → mice
tooth → teeth

2

Same form



sheep → sheep
deer → deer
species → species
aircraft → aircraft

3

Borrowed endings



analysis → analyses
cactus → cacti
criterion → criteria
larva → larvae

4

Context choices



fish / fishes
index / indexes / indices
formula / formulas / formulae
person / people / persons



Check meaning • notice the ending • think about origin • confirm in a dictionary.

Worksheet 1: Match the Changes

Name: _____

Write the plural. Then label its family: C = complete change, V = vowel change, S = same form, B = borrowed ending.

Singular	Plural	Family
person		
child		
mouse		
goose		
tooth		
foot		
sheep		
deer		
analysis		
criteria		
cactus		
larva		

Choose two pairs and circle the letters that changed.

Worksheet 1: Match the Changes

ANSWERS

Write the plural. Then label its family: C = complete change, V = vowel change, S = same form, B = borrowed ending.

Singular	Plural	Family
person	people	C
child	children	C
mouse	mice	V
goose	geese	V
tooth	teeth	V
foot	feet	V
sheep	sheep	S
deer	deer	S
analysis	analyses	B
criteria	criteria	B
cactus	cacti	B
larva	larvae	B

Choose two pairs and circle the letters that changed.

mouse → mice tooth → teeth

Worksheet 2: Build the Plural

Name: _____

Complete each sentence with the correct plural of the noun in brackets. Then choose any three answers and explain the change.

1. The _____ welcomed visitors to the library. (woman)
2. Two _____ crossed the paddock. (ox)
3. The hikers rested their sore _____. (foot)
4. Tiny _____ hid beside the grain sack. (mouse)
5. The class compared two _____ of the results. (analysis)
6. Doctors discussed several possible _____. (diagnosis)
7. The judges used three _____ to score the entries. (criterion)
8. A flock of _____ landed near the lake. (goose)
9. The museum displayed an ancient _____. (tooth)
10. Three _____ landed safely. (aircraft)
11. Several rare _____ live in the wetlands. (species)
12. Scientists studying forest _____ . (fungus)

1. My explanation:

2. My explanation:

3. My explanation:

Worksheet 2: Build the Plural

ANSWERS

Complete each sentence with the correct plural of the noun in brackets. Then choose any three answers and explain the change.

1. The women welcomed visitors to the library. (woman)
2. Two oxen crossed the paddock. (ox)
3. The hikers rested their sore feet. (foot)
4. Tiny mice hid beside the grain sack. (mouse)
5. The class compared two analyses of the results. (analysis)
6. Doctors discussed several possible diagnoses. (diagnosis)
7. The judges used three criteria to score the entries. (criterion)
8. A flock of geese landed near the pond. (goose)
9. The museum displayed ancient teeth. (tooth)
10. Three aircraft landed safely. (aircraft)
11. Several rare species live in the wetlands. (species)
12. Scientists studied forest fungi. (fungus)

1. My explanation:

woman → women: internal vowel change

2. My explanation:

analysis → analyses: -is changes to -es

3. My explanation:

aircraft → aircraft: same form

Worksheet 3: Borrowed Endings Lab – Page 1

Name: _____

-is → -es 	-on → -a 	-a → -ae 	some -us → -i 
---	--	---	---

Write the traditional learned plural, then circle the changed ending.

Singular		Traditional plural
1	analysis	
2	diagnosis	
3	crisis	
4	criterion	
5	phenomenon	
6	vertebra	
7	cactus	
8	fungus	
9	syllabus	
10	radius	
11	nucleus	
12		

Worksheet 3: Borrowed Endings Lab — Page 1

ANSWERS

-is → -es 	-on → -a 	-a → -ae 	some -us → -i 
---	--	---	---

Write the traditional learned plural, then circle the changed ending.

Singular		Traditional plural
1	analysis	analys <u>e</u>
2	diagnosis	diagnos <u>es</u>
3	crisis	cris <u>es</u>
4	criterion	criteri <u>a</u>
5	phenomenon	phenomen <u>a</u>
6	larva	larv <u>ae</u>
7	vertebra	vertebra <u>ae</u>
8	cactus	cact <u>i</u>
9	fungus	fung <u>i</u>
10	syllabus	syllab <u>i</u>
11	radius	radii <u>i</u>
12	nucleus	nuclei <u>i</u>

Worksheet 3: Borrowed Endings in Context – Page 2

Name: _____

Complete each sentence with the correct plural of the noun in brackets.

1. The students compared two _____ of the poem. (analysis)
2. The clinic reviewed several _____. (diagnosis)
3. The town prepared for two water _____. (crisis)
4. The judges agreed on four _____. (criterion)
5. The science show explained unusual weather _____. (phenomenon)
6. Tiny insect _____ higgled in the mud sample. (larva)
7. The skeleton now curved _____. (vertebra)
8. Several desert _____ flowered after rain. (cactus)
9. The class observed different _____ under the microscope. (fungus)
10. The diagram labelled the cell _____. (nucleus)



Choose one answer. Explain how its ending changed.

Worksheet 3: Borrowed Endings in Context – Page 2

ANSWERS

Complete each sentence with the correct plural of the noun in brackets.

1. The students compared two analyses of the poem. (analysis)
2. The clinic reviewed several diagnoses. (diagnosis)
3. The town prepared for two water crises. (crisis)
4. The judges agreed on four criteria. (criterion)
5. The science show explained unusual weather phenomena. (phenomenon)
6. Tiny insect larvae higgled in the pond sample. (larva)
7. The skeleton showed curved vertebrae. (vertebra)
8. Several desert cacti flowered after rain. (cactus)
9. The class observed different fungi under the microscope. (fungus)
10. The diagram labelled the cell nuclei. (nucleus)



Choose one answer. Explain how its ending changed.

Example: criterion → criteria; the -on ending changes to -a.



Worksheet 4: Edit the Evidence



Name: _____

The museum newsletter contains exactly 10 incorrect plurals.
Underline each error and write the correct form in the numbered table.

On opening day, three childs hurried into the Discovery Hall. Two womans were guiding a group of person through the fossil gallery. The visitors studied several tooths and the foots of ancient animals. In the science lab, the class compared two analysises of soil and recorded three criterions for a fair test. Outside, gooses roosted near the pond while sheeps grazed beside two deers. A guide explained that these unusual plurals had to be used clearly.

	Incorrect plural	Correct plural
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

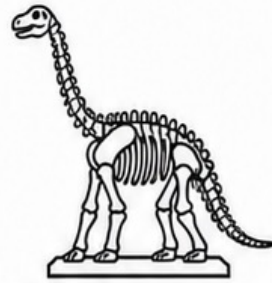
Choose two corrections and name the plural family.

1. _____

2. _____



Worksheet 4: Edit the Evidence



ANSWERS

The museum newsletter contains exactly 10 incorrect plurals.
Underline each error and write the correct form in the numbered table.

On opening day, three childs hurried into the Discovery Hall. Two womans were guiding a group of person through the fossil gallery. The visitors studied several tooths and the foots of ancient animals. In the science lab, the class compared two analysises of soil and recorded three criteria for a fair test. Outside gooses roosted near the pond while sheeps grazed beside two deers. A guide explained that these unusual plurals had not been used clearly.

	Incorrect plural	Correct plural
1.	childs	children
2.	womans	women
3.	person	people
4.	tooths	teeth
5.	foots	feet
6.	analysises	analyses
7.	criteria	criteria
8.	gooses	geese
9.	sheeps	sheep
10.	deers	deer

Choose two corrections and name the plural family.

1. children — complete change

2. geese — vowel change

Worksheet 5: Precision Plurals

Name: _____

Some nouns have more than one accepted plural. Context can make one form more natural.

people / persons
fish / fishes
indexes / indices
formulas / formulae
mediums / media

Choose the more natural plural for each context.

- Four _____ waited at the bus stop. (people / persons)
- The notice read: "Authorised _____ only." (people / persons)
- We counted six _____ in the river. (fish / fishes)
- The reef supports many _____ from different species. (fish / fishes)
- This reference book has two _____ . (indexes / indices)
- The maths _____ formula uses two _____ . (indexes / indices)
- The class checked two distance _____ . (formulas / formulae)
- The historical text records several Latin _____ . (formulas / formulae)
- The artist experimented with three _____ . (mediums / media)
- News _____ reported the event. (mediums / media)

Why did context matter?

Which pair would you confirm in a dictionary?

Worksheet 5: Precision Plurals

ANSWERS

Some nouns have more than one accepted plural. Context can make one form more natural.

people / persons
fish / fishes
indexes / indices
formulas / formulae
mediums / media

Choose the more natural plural for each context.

- Four _____ waited at the bus stop. (people / persons)
- The notice read: "Authorised _____ only." (people / persons)
- We counted six _____ in the river. (fish / fishes)
- The reef supports many _____ from different species. (fish / fishes)
- This reference book has two _____ on _____ . (indexes / indices)
- The maths formula uses two small _____ . (indexes / indices)
- The class checked two distance _____ . (formulas / formulae)
- The historical text records several Latin _____ . (formulas / formulae)
- The artist experimented with three _____ . (mediums / media)
- News _____ reported the event. (mediums / media)

Why did context matter?

Context shows whether we mean everyday people, formal persons, individual fish, different species, or a specialised subject convention.

Which pair would you confirm in a dictionary?

indexes / indices — the subject and style guide may affect the choice.

Worksheet 6: Plural Hunt



Name: _____

Read the museum report. Find and underline the 12 less-common plurals, then sort them by family.

At the museum's night opening, people gathered beside the fossil gallery while children followed a lantern trail. In the natural history room, models of mice showed their tiny teeth and feet. A guide explained why sheep and deer can look the same in singular and plural forms. Next, students read two analyses of an ancient site and checked the criteria used by archaeologists. The science wing displayed weather phenomena, pond larvae and desert cacti. Each group carried a clipboard, recorded one surprising fact and discussed how their knowledge changed. Before leaving, visitors compared their notes, asked clarifying questions and chose one plural to explain. The curator reminded everyone that meaning, word history and context can help a writer select the clearest form.

Complete change	Vowel change	Same form	Borrowed ending

Explain one choice:

Worksheet 6: Plural Hunt



ANSWERS

Read the museum report. Find and underline the 12 less-common plurals, then sort them by family.

At the museum's night opening, people gathered beside the fossil gallery while children followed a lantern trail. In the natural history room, models of mice showed their tiny teeth and feet. A guide explained why sheep and deer can look the same in singular and plural forms. Next, students read two analyses of an ancient site and checked the criteria set by archaeologists. The science wing displayed weather phenomena, pond larvae and desert cacti. Each group carried a clipboard, recorded one surprising fact and discussed how the night's temperature had changed. Before leaving, visitors compared their notes, asked careful questions and chose one plural to explain. The curator reminded everyone that meaning, word history and context can help a writer select the clearest form.

Complete change	Vowel change	Same form	Borrowed ending
<u>people</u> , <u>children</u>	<u>mice</u> , <u>teeth</u> , <u>feet</u>	<u>sheep</u> , <u>deer</u>	<u>analyses</u> , <u>criteria</u> , <u>phenomena</u> , <u>larvae</u> , <u>cacti</u>

Explain one choice:

Analyses is borrowed: the singular ending -is changes to -es.

Plural Pathways



1	child
2	person
3	house
4	tooth
5	foot
6	goose
7	louse
8	sheep



9	deer
10	species
11	aircraft
12	salmon
13	analysis
14	news
15	diagnosis
16	criterion



17	phenomenon
18	cactus
19	fungus
20	larva
21	vertebra
22	index
23	appendix
24	family



RULES

- Roll one die. Move.
- Say the plural.
- Name the family or explain the change.
- Correct? Stay.
- Not yet? Move back one space.
- First to **FINISH** wins.

Plural Pathways Recording Sheet

Year 5



Name: _____



Record up to 12 turns. Check each answer with a partner or dictionary.

	Singular	My plural	Family or reason	Checked
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				

Plural Family Match Cards

person

people

child

children

mouse

mice

tooth

teeth

sheep

sheep

analysis

analyses

criterion

criteria

cactus

cacti

larva

larvae

phenomenon

phenomena



Plural Family Sorting Mat

Match the singular card to its plural. Place the pair in the best family.

Complete change

Same form

-is or -on changes

Other borrowed ending



What changed? How do you know?



Assessment: Museum Curator's Label – Page 1



Name: _____

Section A: Write the plural and name the family. (16 marks)

Singular	Plural	Family
child		
mouse		
tooth		
sheep		
analysis		
criterion		
larva		
phenomenon		

Section B: Correct the plural error in each label. (4 marks)

1. There are three children in this habitat. _____
2. The display includes several teeth. _____
3. Scientists compared two analyses. _____
4. Two womans discovered the site. _____

Section C: Why are some plurals called irregular? (3 marks)

Total: ____ / 23

Assessment: Museum Curator's Label – Page 1



ANSWERS

Section A: Write the plural and name the family. (16 marks)

Singular	Plural	Family
child	children	complete change
mouse	mice	vowel change
tooth	teeth	vowel change
sheep	sheep	same family
analysis	analyses	borrowed ending
criterion	criteria	borrowed ending
larva	larvae	borrowed ending
phenomenon	phenomena	borrowed ending

Section B: Correct the plural error in each label. (4 marks)

1. The deer lives in this habitat.

deer

2. The display includes several tooth.

teeth

3. Scientists compared two analyses.

analyses

4. Two womans discovered the site.

women

Section C: Why are some plurals called irregular? (3 marks)

Irregular plurals do not simply add -s or -es. They may change inside, change completely, stay the same or keep an older borrowed ending.

Total: 23 / 23

Assessment: Museum Curator's Label — Page 2



Name: _____

Write a 120–160 word museum label that uses the plural forms of at least six nouns from this list: child, person, mouse, sheep, analysis, criterion, fungus, phenomenon. Underline each less-common plural. Then explain three spelling choices.

Singular	Plural	Why?

My 120–160 word museum label:

Choice 1:

Choice 2:

Choice 3:

Irregular Plurals — Year 5 Rubric

Criteria	BEGINNING	DEVELOPING	ACHIEVING	CONFIDENT	EXCEEDING
Accurate plural forms	Few forms correct, even with help.	Some forms correct; errors remain.	Most taught forms are correct.	Taught forms are accurate in varied tasks.	All forms are consistently accurate, including challenging examples.
Pattern and word-origin knowledge	Identifies few patterns.	Identifies simple patterns with prompts.	Reports patterns and recognises borrowed endings.	Explains patterns and origin clues clearly.	Compares patterns and independently checks exceptions.
Context and meaning	Choices often do not fit the meaning.	Sometimes uses context with support.	Usually chooses a form that fits the context.	Selects precise forms in formal and everyday contexts.	Explains subtle context differences accurately.
Explanation of choices	Gives little or no reason.	Gives a simple reason with prompts.	Explains a change using context terms.	Justifies choices using pattern, meaning or origin.	Gives precise, independent, evidence-based reasons.
Editing and presentation	Many errors; difficult to follow.	Some errors remain; presentation is uneven.	Mostly accurate, legible and complete.	Carefully edited, clear and well organised.	Consistently polished, accurate and publication-ready.

Irregular Plurals



Our learning focus

We are learning to explore less-common prefixes, how word endings change, and use word origin to spell unfamiliar forms.

Success:

- identify a familiar word in a text
- identify a word in a text
- justify a choice in a text



When is a plural irregular?

A plural is irregular when it does not simply add -s or -es

Some plurals:

- change inside
- change completely
- keep the same
- keep a vowel before ending



Regular first, exceptions second

Regular patterns:

- book → books
- box → boxes
- city → cities

Irregular patterns:

- child → children
- mouse → mice
- analysis → analyses



A four-step plural check

1. Find the base noun.
2. Read the context.
3. Notice its family origin.
4. Confirm uncertain forms in a dictionary.



Complete-change plurals

person → people

child → children

man → men

woman → women

ox → oxen



Internal vowel changes

mouse → mice

louse → lice

goose → geese

tooth → teeth

foot → feet



Some forms stay the same

one sheep → many sheep

one deer → several deer

one species → many species

one aircraft → three aircraft

one salmon → six salmon



Borrowed endings carry history

Some Greek- and Latin-derived nouns keep their learned plural form.

Modern English more often uses a regular form for some words.

Meaning, subject, and style can guide the choice.



-is often becomes -es

analysis → analyses

diagnosis → diagnoses

crisis → crises

Notice: the first **is** changes to **-es**.



-on and -um can become -a

criterion → criteria

phenomenon → phenomena

medium → media

These learned nouns keep an older ending pattern.



-a can become -ae

larva → larvae

vertebra → vertebrae

formula → formulae

Formulae is a standard word in modern English.



Some -us words use -i

cactus → cacti

fungus → fungi

Cactuses and funguses can also be standard in general contexts.

Check the subject and style.



-ex and -ix have choices

index → indexes or indices

appendix → appendixes or appendices

Context and subject conventions matter

Use a dictionary or style guide when unsure.



Context selects the best form

fish — several individual fish

fishes — different species

people — everyday use

persons — formal wording

Choose the form that makes the meaning clearest.



Try three in context

Complete each sentence aloud. Then name the form.

1. We compared two _____ analysis.
2. Five _____ crossed the field. (situation)
3. The judges _____ the case. (criterion)



Edit the evidence

Correct each museum label.

- Three childs enter the hall.
- The display includes ancient tools.
- We compare two analyses.
- Changes are made for criteria.



Build a memory book

- Group words by family.
- Say the singular and plural aloud.
- Notice the change in letters.
- Connect the word to a related term or origin.
- Check uncertain families.



Exit check

1. Give the plural of phenomenon.
2. Name one same-form plural.
3. Explain why a dictionary can help with index.





Well Done!



PREFE

Irregular Plurals Quiz



Question 1 – Multiple choice

Which is the plural of child?

- A. childs
- B. childes
- C. children
- D. child



Answer 1

C. children

The word changes completely



Question 2 – True or false

Sheep can be both singular and plural.

True or false?



Answer 2

True.

Sheep is a same-form plural.



Question 3 – Short answer

Complete the sentence.

one analysis, several _____



Answer 3

analyses

The ending changes from -is to -es.



Question 4 – Multiple choice

Which sentence is correct?

A. Two criterion was used.

B. Two criteria were used.

C. Two criterias were used.

D. Two criterias were use.



Answer 4

B. Two criteria were used.

Criterion becomes criteria, and the plural verb is were.



Question 5 – True or false

The plural of criterion is criterions

True or false?



Answer 5

False.

The learned plural criteria.



Question 6 – Multiple choice

Which noun usually stays the same in the plural?

A. mouse

B. tooth

C. aircraft

D. person



Answer 6

C. aircraft

One aircraft; three aircraft.



Question 7 – Short answer

Complete the phrase.

one tooth, three _____



Answer 7

teeth

The internal vowel changes.



Question 8 – Multiple choice

Which sentence best uses fishes?

- A. We caught three fishes.
- B. The reef supports many fishes in different species.
- C. One fishes is on my way.
- D. I ate two fishes for lunch.



Answer 8

B. The reef supports many fishes from different species.

Fishes can emphasize different needs.



Question 9 – True or false

Some borrowed nouns keep older Greek or Latin spelling changes.

True or false?



Answer q

True.

Examples include analysis – analysis and phenomenon →
phenomena



Question 10 – Short answer

Correct this phrase.

two person



Answer 10

two people

Person usually becomes person in everyday English.





Well Done!



PREFACE