

Pronunciation of -s, -es, -'s ending

Let's Learn!

There are four purposes for adding -s, -es, or -'s to a word:

- To create a plural noun (*hats*)
- To conjugate a verb (*rains*)
- To show possession (*coach's, coaches'*)
- To create a contraction (*coach's meaning coach is or coach has*)

Note that 's can signal **noun possession and the contracted form of the words *is* and *has* in spoken English**. Sentence context must be used to recognize whether ***coach's*** means that the coach owns something or that it is a contraction of ***coach is*** or ***coach has***. The pronunciation is the same whether the apostrophe is signaling a single owner (***coach's***) or many owners (***coaches'***).

Pronunciation of -s, -es, 's endings

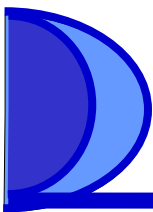
No matter the purpose or spelling of the -s, -es, 's ending, the pronunciation guidelines are the same. In English, the -s, -es, 's ending has three possible pronunciations:

- /s/ 's sound': hats /hæts/
- /z/ 'z sound': loves /lʌvz/
- /ɪz/ 'short i'+z sound': misses /'mɪ sɪz/

1. -s, -es, 's ending pronounced as /ɪz/

Pronounce the -s, -es, 's ending as /ɪz/ when the final sound before the addition of the -s, -es, 's ending is any of the following.

- /s/ 's sound': misses
- /z/ 'z sound': causes
- /tʃ/ 'ch sound': watches
- /dʒ/ 'j sound': changes
- /ʃ/ 'sh sound': wishes
- /ʒ/ 'zh sound': garages



Pronunciation of -s, -es, -'s ending

2. -s, -es, 's ending pronounced as /s/

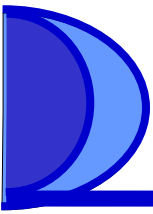
When the final sound of the word is an unvoiced sound (except the sounds listed for pattern #1), the -s, -es, 's ending is pronounced as /s/. An unvoiced sound does not use the vocal cords during its production.

- /p/ 'p sound': stops
- /k/ 'k sound': looks
- /t/ 't sound': cats
- /θ/ 'unvoiced th': Earth's
- /f/ 'f sound': laughs
- /ç/ 'c sound': relics

3. -s, -es, 's ending pronounced as /z/

When the final sound of the word is a voiced sound (except the sounds listed for pattern #1), the -s, -es, 's ending is pronounced as /z/. A voiced sound uses the vocal cords during its production. Since all vowel sounds are voiced, there are far more voiced sounds in English than unvoiced sounds. Besides the sounds listed for pattern #1, English has 10 other voiced consonant sounds that occur at the end of a word:

- /b/ 'b sound': describes
- /g/ 'g sound': begs
- /d/ 'd sound': words
- /ð/ 'voiced th': bathes
- /v/ 'v sound': loves
- /l/ 'l sound': calls
- /r/ 'r sound': cures
- /m/ 'm sound': dreams
- /n/ 'n sound': rains
- /ŋ/ 'ng sound': belongs



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Example -s, -es, 's use in context

The -s, -es, 's in the word *dogs* is pronounced identically in all four sentences below. The context of the sentence is necessary to comprehend the meaning of the -s, -es, 's.

- The *dogs* were barking all night long. (plural)
- The *dogs'* collars should be replaced. (plural possessive)
- The *dog's* sleeping in the bed again. (dog is)
- The *dog's* been good and deserves a treat. (dog has)

Let's Try!

Write the words in the right column.

/s/	/z/	/ɪz/

Fixes, governments, lessons, reaches, works, tries, machines, kisses, tourists, weapons, beaches, students, moths, clothes, languages, sheets, drives, traffic's, churches, remembers, expects, twigs, rises, pets, things, houses, information's, senses, snaps, lapses