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Nouns

NOUNS – L4: PLURAL NOUNS IN GERMAN

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Video Lesson:

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PLURAL – INTRODUCTION

• **Good news first:**

You don't have to decide between masculine, feminine, or neuter in the plural anymore: **THERE IS ONLY ONE FORM**.

• **Bad news:**

There are different plural endings: "-n/-en", "-r/-er", "-e", and "-s". There is even the possibility that the noun doesn't change at all; you just have to change the article.

And again: **there is no universal rule that fits for all words**.

**Advice:**

Write the plural form together with the noun on another line in your vocabulary list. Use my sample list!

PLURAL WITH “-N/-EN”

Masculine nouns that end in "-ent", "-ant", "-and", "-or", "-ist":

- “der Student“ – “die Studenten“
- “der Polizist“ – “die Polizisten“

Feminine nouns that end in "-in", "-ion", "-ik", "-ung", "-tät", "-schaft", "-keit", "-heit":

- “die Universität“ – “die Universitäten“
- “die Organisation“ – “die Organisationen“

99% of all nouns that end in "-e":

- “die Flasche“ – “die Flaschen“
- “die Tasse“ – “die Tassen“



ATTENTION

For nouns that end in "-in", the "n" is doubled.

Example: "die Kellnerin" – "die Kellnerin**nen**"

PLURAL WITH "-E"

Many masculine nouns:

- "der Baum" – "die Bäume"
- "der König" – "die Könige"

Many monosyllabic feminine nouns:

- "die Nacht" – "die Nächte"
- "die Hand" – "die Hände"



ATTENTION

For feminine nouns with a, o, u, always add an umlaut (ä, ö, ü).

For masculine nouns, usually, add an umlaut (but not always).

PLURAL WITH "-R/-ER"

Many neuter and monosyllabic nouns:

In the plural, we add an umlaut (usually).

- "das Haus" – "die Häuser"
- "das Kind" – "die Kinder"



ATTENTION

Feminine nouns NEVER have the ending "-r"/"-er" for the plural form.

For feminine nouns with a, o, u, we always add an umlaut (ä, ö, ü).

PLURAL WITH “-S”

All nouns that end in **a, i, o, u, or y:**

- “das Sofa“ – “**die Sofas**“
- “das Auto“ – “**die Autos**“
- “die Omi“ – “**die Omis**“
- “das Hobby“ – “**die Hobbys**“

Many foreign words:

- “das Team“ – “**die Teams**“
- “der Job“ – “**die Jobs**“

Family names:

- “die Meiers“ (= Familie Meier)
- “die Müllers“ (= Familie Müller)

PLURAL WITHOUT AN ENDING

Masculine and neuter words with the endings “-el”, “-er” and “en”.

If we don't add an ending, then an umlaut is usually required for the letters **a, o and u**.

- “der Apfel“ – “**die Äpfel**“
- “der Vater“ – “**die Väter**“
- “das Brötchen“ – “**die Brötchen**“



ATTENTION

Feminine nouns ending with “-el” form their plural with “n.”

Example: Die Kartoffel – die Kartoffeln

PLURAL OF FOREIGN WORDS

Words taken from English usually end in "s" in the plural form.

Words taken from Latin or Greek often have a unique form:

- "das Museum" – "die **Museen**"
- "das Praktikum" – "die **Praktika**"

NO PLURAL FORM POSSIBLE

Some words do not have a plural form. They have a singular form only:

- "das **Obst**" → no plural form possible (Fruits)
- "die **Milch**" → no plural form possible (Milk)
- "der **Durst**" → no plural form possible (Thirst)

The singular word already talks about a group of something, or it is uncountable.

(Pay attention because uncountable nouns in English are not always uncountable in German – Lucky for you, it's way more straightforward in German than in English.)

NO SINGULAR FORM POSSIBLE

Some words do not have a singular form. They only have a plural form:

- "die **Leute**" → no singular form possible (People)
- "die **Eltern**" → no singular form possible (Parents)
- "die **Ferien**" → no singular form possible (Vacation)

Those words can't have a singular form due to their meaning.

SUMMARY

- In the plural, it doesn't really matter whether they are masculine, feminine, or neuter).
- You form the plural form with the endings “-e/-en”, “-r/-er”, “-e”, “-s”, or even just by changing the article in front.
- Some foreign words use a unique plural form.
- Some words don't have a plural form.
- Some words don't have a singular form.

**Tip:**

Feminine Nouns: usually "-en", "-n"

Masculine Nouns: usually "-e"

Neuter Nouns: usually "-er"

Masculine and Neuter Nouns that end in "-el", "-en", "-er": no ending

If you follow this tip, you will have an excellent chance to guess the plural correctly. But unfortunately, it doesn't always work. That's why it's essential to:

Always write down the plural form in your vocabulary list!

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